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"Blessed are they that wash their robes in the Blood of the Lamb." APOC. XXII., 14.

Charity for the Suffering Souls.

An Explanation of the Catholic Doctrine of Purgatory.

With a Treatise on the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and on the Spiritual Benevolent Fraternity for the Relief and Ransom of the Suffering Souls.

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....BY....

REV. JOHN A. NAGELEISEN,

Missionary Priest of the Congregation of the Most Precious Blood.

CINCINNATI, OHIO:
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1895.

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IMPRIMATUR:

† JOSEPH RADEMACHER, *Bishop of Fort Wayne.*

FEBRUARY 2, 1895.

Entered, according to act of Congress, in the year 1895,

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APPROBATIONS.

ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL.

Cincinnati, November 29, 1892.

REV. JOHN A. NAGELEISEN.

Rev. Dear Sir:—Your book on Purgatory and the Suffering Souls—"Charity for the Suffering Souls"—has been received.

I recommend it as an excellent book, to give useful and interesting instruction on the subject of Purgatory—to enliven the faith and devotion of the readers, and thereby to increase their holiness and the power of their prayers and good works in relieving those suffering friends of God.—I hope it will be widely circulated, and that it will bring you great reward in heaven. Your servant in Christ,

† WILLIAM HENRY ELDER,
Archbishop of Cincinnati.

Milwaukee, Wis., December 2, 1892.

REV. A. NAGELEISEN.

Rev. and Dear Sir:—Gladly do I unite with his Grace, the Most Rev. Archbishop of Cincinnati, in recommending to the faithful the book "Charity for the Suffering Souls"—a book of instructions, very useful especially for all those who belong to confraternities for the Relief of the Poor Souls in Purgatory. Yours most truly,

† F. X. KATZER,
Archbishop of Milwaukee.

ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL.

Nashville, Tenn., February 16, 1893.

REV. DEAR FATHER NAGELEISEN:

It was only recently that I was enabled to examine more thoroughly your work entitled "Charity for the Suffering Souls". Indeed, this book deserves to be recommended most strongly to our Catholic people. It explains the doctrine of Purgatory in an interesting, popular manner, the instructions being based throughout on the teaching of the Church and the declarations of our ablest theologians. The chapter treating on the "Means of Helping the Poor Souls" is especially practical.

May the book find a wide circulation! May it enliven and promote among our Catholic people the blessed and salutary devotion for the Relief of the Poor Souls! With best wishes,

Yours most truly in Christ,

† JOSEPH RADEMACHER,
Bishop of Nashville.

Cleveland, O., February 22, 1893.

REV. JOHN A. NAGELEISEN, C.PP.S., Collegeville, Ind.

Rev. Dear Sir:—Whatever serves to promote the devotion of the faithful towards the Poor Suffering Souls in Purgatory must meet with my cordial approbation. Your book on Purgatory has that for its only object.

May God bless the work and obtain for it a wide circulation. Full of thought, full of piety and eminently practical, it ought to secure many helpers for the Poor Souls in Purgatory.

Sincerely yours in Xsto,

† IGN. F. HORSTMANN,
Bishop of Cleveland.

Belleville, Ill., March 4, 1893.

"Charity for the Suffering Souls", by Rev. John A. Nageleisen, C.PP.S.,—a book of instructions for those who are members of confraternities for the Relief of the Poor Souls in Purgatory—is herewith warmly recommended to the faithful.

† J. JANSSEN,
Bishop of Belleville.

St. Cloud, March 29, 1894.

REV. JOHN A. NAGELEISEN, C.PP.S., Collegeville, Ind.

Reverend Father:—Most cordially and with great pleasure do I herewith comply with your request, namely to recommend to the faithful your book "Charity for the Suffering Souls". The book contains the strongest, most touching appeals in behalf of those Suffering Souls who are still united with us in the love of God. We are exhorted to assist these souls by offering for them, in prayer and sacrifice, the merits of the Precious Blood of Christ. Even now the faithful departed hear the voice of this Blood as the voice of reconciliation; and they will hear it as such, to their complete justification, on the day of the general resurrection. It was, therefore, not more than proper that the book should be written by a member of the Congregation of the Most Precious Blood. Wishing you the best of success and God's blessing for the work you have undertaken, I am, Reverend Father,

Yours most truly in Christ,

† OTTO ZARDETTI,
Bishop of St. Cloud.

Denver, Colo., 255 *S. Evans St., September* 7, 1894.

REV. JOHN A. NAGELEISEN:

Your confrere, the Rev. Andrew Gietl, lately presented to me a copy of your book "Charity for the Suffering Souls". As a zealous friend of the Poor Souls I am greatly delighted to see this splendid work making its appearance among our people.

May God in His infinite goodness bless the author, as I am sure that the Poor Souls bless you for the sake of your charitable mediation! It is in their behalf that you have undertaken this noble work.

† N. C. MATZ,
Bishop of Denver.

ABBEY NEW-ENGELBERG.

Conception P. O., Mo., November 20, 1894.

REV. JOHN A. NAGELEISEN, C.PP.S., Collegeville, Ind.

Reverend Father:—Please accept my sincerest thanks for your kindness in sending me a copy of your excellent book "Charity for the Suffering Souls". Judging from what I have read of the book, I am glad to say that it does full honor to the title it bears—it is indeed a fountain of "Charity for the Suffering Souls". Following the doctrine of the Church as its guide the book portrays in a strikingly clear and interesting manner the helpless condition of the souls in Purgatory; it points out the various means that may be employed to help the poor sufferers; and it explains the powerful motives that ought to induce us to lend them our assistance. Whoever takes up this book will, I am sure, read it not only once—he will read it again and again; and the result of such reading will be on the one hand an ever-increasing zeal to help the Suffering Souls, while on the other hand it will strengthen in him that fear of the Lord which in Holy Scripture is called "the beginning of wisdom", and which will lead him to guard himself against committing even the least wilful sin. The book will teach him that sin is not to be looked at as a trifle, since it is for this very purpose—to be perfectly clansed from sin—that the Poor Souls are detained so long in the dreadful flames of Purgatory.

I therefore wish your excellent book the widest circulation among our Catholic people. Most gratefully yours in Xsto,

FROWIN CONRAD, O. S. B., *Abbot.*

Many books of larger or smaller size have been published treating on devotion in behalf of the faithful departed, all of which deserve to be recommended for use during the month of November, the month devoted to the Poor Souls in Purgatory. Nevertheless, we do not hesitate to assert that this Poor Souls Book probably surpasses every other book of this kind. The size of the volume, the thorough explanation of the doctrine concerning Purgatory, the many interesting examples that are narrated, the exposition of the various means that the faithful may make use of to assist the departed souls, thereby to gain for themselves a host of grateful friends for eternity—these are points that make the book one of the most useful works of instruction that have been published in our time. We, therefore, hope that this book, written in and destined for America, may find the circulation it deserves; and that accordingly it may produce great results for the eternal welfare of our brethren and sisters in Purgatory, as also for the temporal and eternal welfare of their benefactors on earth.—(*Ohio Waisenfreund.*)

A short time ago we received from the author, Rev. John A. Nageleisen, C.PP S., a copy of his book entitled "Charity for the Suffering Souls". It is a book of instruction on Purgatory, intended chiefly for those who are members of Poor Souls confraternities. Can there be a question of greater importance for a thoughtful, sympathetic Christian than that pertaining to our future life in the other world and the fate of those who have passed before us through the gate of death? We have

read Father Nageleisen's Poor Souls Book, and we have found the reading of it highly edifying. It is an exhaustive work, a book of instruction in the best sense of the word. The first part is divided into seven chapters treating of the following questions: "The existence of Purgatory; the condition of the Suffering Souls; the means of helping the Suffering Souls; the motives for assisting the Suffering Souls; gratitude of the Suffering Souls towards their benefactors; the heroic act of love for the Suffering Souls; the apparitions of a Poor Soul in 1870". Part second treats of "the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood; remarks concerning indulgences; the Spiritual Benevolent Fraternity for the Relief of the Suffering Souls". The book is neatly bound and comprises 578 pages of reading matter. It is worthy of being introduced into every Catholic family.—(*Daily Buffalo Volksfreund, December* 17, 1894.)

CHARITY FOR THE SUFFERING SOULS. A book of instruction for all Christians, especially for members of confraternities for the Relief of the Poor Souls in Purgatory. By John A. Nageleisen, C.PP.S., missionary priest of the Congregation of the Most Precious Blood. 578 pages, bound. Price $1.15. To be obtained from *The Spiritual Benevolent Fraternity, Collegeville, Ind.*

This book being accompanied by the recommendations of the Most Rev. Archbishops Katzer and Elder, there can be no question that its contents are theologically correct. In this volume is embodied the best of what is important and interesting for Catholics to learn regarding the subject indicated by the title, the material for the instructions being gathered from various sources—Holy Scripture, tradition, the decrees of ecclesiastical councils, the writings of the holy Fathers, the common assent of all nations. The book moreover treats of the means by which the Poor Souls can be aided; and it expounds, clearly and convincingly, the motives that ought to induce us to help these Souls, as also their great and efficient gratitude towards us for whatever relief we bring them, be it ever so small. But what appeals more than anything else to the reader's sympathy is the holy zeal that the book breathes forth—the zeal that evidently directed the reverend author's pen while he was writing the work. There have been many books written on this subject—devotion to the faithful departed—enough to make a good-sized library; nevertheless the work we are at present noticing may be pronounced one of the best, most popular books of this class. And we are acquainted with very few works published in America that seem to be so well adapted to promote the true and specific sentiment and praxis of Catholicism as this book on Purgatory and the devotion to the Poor Souls. Such promoting of the Catholic cause seems to be greatly needed, considering the levelling, liberalizing, secularizing—yes, we might almost say, protestantizing—tendency of our day. We trust that this excellent book may be introduced for diligent use into a large number of Catholic families in America.—*The Spiritual Benevolent Fraternity* of Collegeville, Ind., has also just begun the publication of a monthly magazine devoted to the interests of said Fraternity, under the following title: *The Messenger of the Spiritual Benevolent Fraternity.* We herewith recommend this magazine to the favorable notice of our readers.—(*Wanderer, December* 5, 1894.)

PREFACE.

THE Omnipotent Word of God, which in the beginning called forth from nothing this magnificent universe, which even penetrated the tomb and compelled death to deliver up its victims; this divine Word which on the Day of Judgment will echo from the rising of the sun to the going-down thereof and summon the dead of all nations to receive retribution: this Divine and Omnipotent Word is even now heard by the dead proclaiming to them pardon and deliverance from the pains of Purgatory. "Amen, amen, I say unto you, that the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." (John v, 25.)

To move this Omnipotent Word to grant pardon and deliverance to the Suffering Souls in consideration of the suffrages of the faithful on earth—such is the object of the following treatises. They are to induce the reader to hasten by his prayer the blessed hour when his brethren and sisters in Purgatory shall hear the summons of the Son of God, "Go forth from your torments; go forth, your punishment is remitted. Enter into the joy of your Lord."

It is, alas, undeniably true that the great majority of men are but little interested in the Suffering Souls who so ardently desire help. Some neglect this duty because they are infidels. They deny the existence of Purgatory, and consequently they do not believe that the faithful can aid the souls confined in it. Besides the infidels, who judge all things religious according to their own limited views, those also deny the middle state, who are separated from the communion of the Catholic Church. Others neglect to assist the Suffering Souls because they have no true conception of this duty, nor of the great advantages to be gained by performing this work of charity. Those separated from the Church do not help the Poor Souls because they do not believe in Purgatory; and many negligent Catholics, despite their belief in this doctrine, do not aid the Suffering Souls because they consider it too inconvenient to do so.

The disbelief in the existence of Purgatory and the neglect of prayer for the captive souls detained in it are both very harmful. Disbelief is in conflict with the doctrine of the Catholic Church, which from the earliest ages has taught the existence of a middle state and the efficacy of prayer for the dead; neglect of this prayer is contrary to the general duty of charity, which obliges us to come to the aid of our fellowman when and wherever we can. How ungrateful of us and how detrimental to the Suffering Souls, if we

Catholics refuse them this Christian charity either because we are ignorant of it or do not sufficiently esteem it! In order to remedy as far as possible this hurtful disregard of duty, we have collected in this volume the most important and instructive points concerning the doctrine of Purgatory. The sources from which these points have been gathered are Holy Scripture, tradition, the decrees of the Church, the writings of the Holy Fathers, the unanimous assent of all nations, and even the writings of non-Catholics. The means by which we can aid the Suffering Souls are extensively treated, especially the expiatory value of Holy Mass; various popular questions are explained at length; the motives for practicing the devotion to the Suffering Souls and the gratitude of these souls towards their benefactors are comprehensively discussed—all this with a view to enkindle our zeal for this charitable work.

As deeds always impress more deeply than words, the instructions are frequently illustrated by examples; but only such examples have been admitted as are of undoubted authenticity. In our times a spurious belief in spiritualism is rampant throughout the world. Thousands and thousands belong to so-called spiritualistic circles and are so being led astray by evil spirits. *Our* spiritualistic belief is essentially true and Catholic, because it is based on the authority of divine faith: namely, we believe in God, in

the immortality of the soul, in guardian angels, in the saints, and in a Purgatory in the next world. May the belief in *this* spiritualistic doctrine gain more and more adherents! And would that every Catholic were filled with fervent, heroic zeal for this work of charity—how many Poor Souls would then be released from their painful captivity! Thereby the number of saints in heaven would be increased to the greater glory of God, while at the same time the salvation of souls here on earth would be greatly promoted.

Concerning the extraordinary events related in this book the author declares, in conformity with a decree of Pope Urban VIII., that he claims for them only human credence, excepting such as are favored with the authoritative decision of the Church. Credence derived from human testimony may however furnish us with the same certitude concerning the truth of a question as does human science, provided the credibility of the person stating a fact is beyond doubt. When once it is established that the conditions required to make a certain fact credible have all been fulfilled, then it is clear that a doubt concerning the truth of that fact is no longer reasonable. When the trustworthiness of the witnesses cannot be called in question—that is, when it is proved that they knew the fact to be true and were willing to testify to its truth; when we are sure that we have received an authentic account of the event—then deception is

impossible; and in such cases human testimony is perfectly reliable. Among the great number of occurrences relating to the Suffering Souls we have selected only the most pertinent, and of these again the best authenticated.

Finally, in order to induce the reader to make practical use of the instructions contained in this volume and because the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the principal and most effective means of helping the Suffering Souls, we concluded to add to this work an explanation of the aim and object of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood for the Relief of the Suffering Souls, and of the Spiritual Benevolent Fraternity instituted for the same purpose. These instructions are followed by a selection of prayers calculated to assist pious souls in their devotions for the relief and ransom of their suffering brethren.

Who can describe the ecstacy, the heavenly joy with which our souls will be enraptured, when we shall meet in the realms of bliss a parent, a brother or sister, a friend or acquaintance, whose release from Purgatory we obtained by our suffrages, whose entrance into everlasting glory we hastened by our prayers! Most sweet indeed is the consolation contained in the doctrine of our holy religion which teaches us that true love, founded in God, is not extinguished by death, but gains its realization in and through God; and that by this love, which is the

bond of perfection, the Church suffering, the Church triumphant and the Church militant are made one family, one body, united for a diversity of ministrations under one Head, Christ our Lord.

May these treatises move fervent and charitable hearts to hasten to the Fountain of the Most Precious Blood, to draw down its cooling dew on the Suffering Souls.

The author formally declares that he submits everything contained in this volume to the infallible judgment of the Holy Catholic Church, whose office it is to scrutinize and approve whatever is taught as Catholic doctrine. In her saving communion he hopes to live and die.

THE AUTHOR.

St. Joseph's College,
Collegeville, Indiana.

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CHAPTER I.

The Existence of Purgatory.

§ 1. Eternity.

1. There is no doubt but that the question of our existence after death is the most important and consequential of all questions. It is the fundamental question of life, decisive of our eternal destiny. Therefore it ever was, and must be, the ultimate and essential purpose of Religion to answer this question.

Eternal thanks to Our Divine Redeemer! We Catholics have the reasons of the faith that is in us implanted deeply in our hearts. Christ, "the Way, the Truth and the Life," who dispels all darkness, lifted the veil that covers the next world and expressed Himself in the most emphatic manner that annihilation is not our destiny, but that we are created for an everlasting life, either of bliss or of torment. "And these shall go into everlasting punishment: but the just into life everlasting." (Matth. xxv. 46.)

2. The body, taken from the earth, returns to dust; but the soul, the spirit breathed into man by his Creator, appears, after death, before God's tribunal to be judged. The soul is immaterial, invisible, a spirit, created in the likeness of God, and immortal. As a child that resembles its parents is the image of its father or mother,

because it has similar features, etc., thus man is the image of God, because he possesses similar (not the same) attributes as God. "And God created man to His own image." (Gen. 1. 27.) Like God, man was to be pure, immaculate, an heir of the kingdom of heaven; he was to be gifted with great knowledge and to be free from concupiscence, misery, pain, and even from death. Thus was the being, which is by nature an immortal spirit, endowed with reason and free will, gifted by the Creator with supernatural qualities. But sin destroyed the work of God. It dishonored heaven and thinned out the ranks of the angels; it destroyed paradise and man's eternal happiness, until the former was regained and the latter restored by the Son of God at the price of His Most Precious Blood.

3. Joseph was the savior of Egypt from famine: Jesus Christ became the Saviour of mankind from eternal damnation. Joseph was persecuted by his brethren, ill-treated by them and sold for twenty pieces of silver: Jesus was betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter, and sold for thirty pieces of silver. After many trials and tribulations Joseph was placed over all Egypt, for Pharao said to him: "Seeing God hath shewed thee all thou hast said, can I find one wiser and one like unto thee? Thou shalt be over my house, and at the commandment of they mouth all the people shall obey: only in the kingly throne will I be above thee. And again Pharao said to Joseph: Behold I have appointed thee over the whole land of Egypt. And he took his ring from his own hand, and gave it into his hand: and he put upon him a robe of silk, and put a chain of gold about his neck. And he made him go up into his second chariot, the crier proclaiming that all should

bow their knee before him, and that they should know he was made governor of the whole land of Egypt. And the king said to Joseph: I am Pharao; without thy commandment no man shall move hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. And he turned his name, and called him in the Egyptian tongue the Saviour of the world." (Gen. XLI. 39—45.) Now Joseph had power over life and death in the land of Egypt. To him all had to go that desired to escape the pangs of hunger; even his father and his brethren had to bow before him and accept of him the necessaries of life. Pharao's order was, "Go to Joseph!" Although Joseph opened the full granaries and provided Egypt with bread, yet those only were saved that made personal application to him and received the gift out of his own hand. Therefore all the people flocked to him; old and young, relatives and strangers, friends and foes, flocked to him from all countries to purchase provisions.

4. Our Lord Jesus Christ also had to suffer, and His sufferings were greater than those of Joseph in Egypt, because He was to be the Saviour of all mankind from eternal death. But He showed Himself as the "Wonderful," as the valiant Hero of whom Isaias foretells, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen." (Isai. IX. 2.) "For a Child is born to us, and a son is given us, and the government is on his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God, the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace. His empire shall be multiplied, and there shall be no end of peace: he shall sit upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it and strengthen it with judgment

and with justice from henceforth and forever." (Isai. IX. 6, 7.)—Jesus "received from God the Father honor and glory, this voice coming down to Him from the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son, in whom I have pleased myself; hear ye Him." (II Peter I. 17.) —Jesus says of Himself: "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth." (Matth. XXVIII. 18.)—"For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and has given Him a name which is above all names: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those in heaven, on earth and under the earth." (Philip. II. 9, 10.) His victory was accomplished in sacrificial death. Redemption was achieved when Jesus, in view of heaven and earth, exclaimed dying on the cross, "It is consummated." (John XIX. 30.)

5. Then death, man's eternal ruin caused by sin, was overcome through the victory of Christ, and life was restored by Him "Who was delivered up for our sins and rose again for our justification." (Rom. IV. 25.) The power of darkness was destroyed; mankind was delivered from disgraceful captivity; the abyss of hell was closed and the gates of paradise were reopened. Christ's treasury of atonement is superabundant and for ever inexhaustible; it is not diminished or depleted even if millions upon millions draw from it grace upon grace, health and strength, light and life. As all the country flocked to Joseph, thus do men "of all nations, and tribes, and peoples" (Apoc. VII. 9.) come to Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, to obtain the eternal heritage of heaven. Without the command of chaste Joseph "no man shall move hand or foot in all the land of Egypt;" without the will of Jesus Christ no man shall enter paradise recovered for us by Him.

To attain salvation all must obey Him; we must personally use the means of grace instituted and ordained by Him; we must, moreover, co-operate with the graces He grants us. On this depends our eternal destiny.

Eternity! Eternity!—Heaven or Hell, one of the two we must choose by our lives. Because "the unjust"—such either by transgression or through unsatisfied justice—"shall not possess the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. VI. 9.), the ineffable mercy of God, in consideration of the merits of Jesus Christ, created, in the next world, a place of purification for those who, at the time of their death, are not entirely pure: this place is called *Purgatory.*

§ 2. Purgatory.

6. Between Heaven, "the place of refreshment, light and peace," and Hell, the abode of eternal torment, there is, till the day of general judgment, a middle state, called Purgatory, for those souls that depart this life justified, but still in need of final purification. In this place of punishment and purification, of justice and mercy, dwell the souls that have venial sins to expiate, or temporal punishment to undergo, or both. The doctrine of the Catholic Church concerning Purgatory is expressed in the following two sentences:

1) There is, in the next world, a temporary place for the atonement of such venial sins, and temporal punishments of sin, as man is found guilty of on his departure from this world.

2) The faithful can, by prayer and good works, especially by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, assist the souls suffering in Purgatory.

Concerning the location of Purgatory, the nature of its torments, the extent of its suffering, etc., the Church has made no official declarations, hence only the two above sentences are dogmas which we must believe under pain of excommunication. Nevertheless we should be guilty of culpable temerity if we were to reject the generally accepted doctrine of the holy Fathers and of notable spiritual writers relative to some other points concerning Purgatory.

7. In connection with the Catholic doctrine concerning Purgatory it is necessary to bear in mind the doctrine of remission of sins. With the remission of mortal sin there is necessarily connected the remission of its eternal punishment. But the case stands quite differently with regard to the *temporal* punishment of sin which God permits to remain even after the remission of its guilt. The sinner who committed a mortal sin and thereby became an enemy of God becomes, through the sacrament of penance, a friend, a child of God; his eternal punishment is condoned, but a temporal punishment remains. It is, however, the general doctrine of theologians that at least a part of the temporal punishment is remitted, every time, in the tribunal of penance, and that this part is in proportion to the contrition and penitent disposition of the repentant sinner. The remaining part must be atoned for in this world by penance, or in the next by the torments of Purgatory.

8. Both the temporal punishment yet due to sin remitted, and the stain of venial sin yet unremitted are, in the sight of God, a defilement of the soul. Venial sin, to which man is so prone, is not remitted by merely external works of penance without true con-

trition; its remission depends on the interior disposition of the penitent soul, on perfect charity, patience and resignation to the will of God. "Whether remission is obtained gradually by means of repeated acts," says Deharbe (*Explanation of the Catechism*, vol. II. p. 409) "or at the parting of the soul from the body through one act of perfect charity, is a question on which theologians do not agree. Suarez defends the latter opinion, because such an act is followed by an increase of charity or sanctifying grace, and may be made so perfectly as to cleanse the soul from every inclination to sin."

9. We must not, however, conclude from this that all souls shall be excluded from the beatific vision of God until they shall have passed through the fiery furnace of Purgatory. Such a view is untenable. Unquestionably true as it is that many souls are banished forever from the presence of God immediately after the particular judgment, it cannot, on the other hand, be denied that they that were cleansed from all their faults in this life, soar up, after the particular judgment, into the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of peace, whose inhabitants are blissful in love.

Moreover, from the fact that a soul is sentenced to chastisement in Purgatory the conclusion is not to be drawn that it will be inferior in heavenly glory to souls admitted to heaven without undergoing purification by fire. The most precious stones and metals sometimes need longer and more thorough purification than less valuable ones. The degree of their value depends on their interior worth and not on the dross and corrosion that surrounds them. Thus also the degree of heavenly glory depends on the merit of each saint. Thus it may

happen that souls eminent for works of penance and full of merit, may nevertheless have to remain in Purgatory longer, and yet, after their purification, they may attain to a higher degree of glory than such as were not in need of purification. Each one shall receive his reward according to his merit, after having paid the last farthing of his debt, being "purified as if by fire."

10. The religious innovators of the last centuries, by denying the existence of Purgatory, made an attempt indefensible both before the tribunal of religion and of reason. They desire to replace this consoling doctrine by one more pleasing to the "father of lies," only for the sake of innovation, and instigated by pride, avarice, envy, sensuality, etc. The rebels dare to weigh God's mercy and judgment in the scales of their darkened reason. By rejecting prayer for the dead and the doctrine of temporal punishment of sin, they disrupt one of the most sacred bonds with which faith has encircled mankind, viz. the communion of saints. The Church militant, suffering and triumphant in its entirety composes the mystical body of Christ, who is the Head, whilst the faithful are the members. The departed, then, who died in the Lord, are an integral part of this great mystical body, either as saints in heaven, or as suffering souls in Purgatory. But the misguided innovators have only the darkness of the grave to place between the human heart and its departed loved ones. Their presumption is condemned by divine revelation and the constant tradition of the Church, by the unanimous belief of all nations, and by Non-Catholics themselves, by reason and by sentiment. Leaving these gloomy and rebellious men to deny the

Suffering Souls a prayer, we shall seek to prove in the following pages how all nations and all ages concur in the sentiment: "There is a Purgatory; and 'it is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.'" (II. Mach. XII., 46.)

§ 3. Sentiment.

11. Like unto a mourning dove, the beloved Spouse of Christ, the Church, never interrupts her sighs and prayers for the faithful departed until they have arrived in the port of eternal bliss. She renews, in Holy Mass our Divine Redeemer's sacrificial death, offering it up to His Heavenly Father; she invites the Church triumphant and the Church militant to join in persevering prayer for the Church suffering. What a consolation for the dying, what a reassurance for the living to profess a religion so comforting: consoling to the dying who, though cleansed from all mortal sin by the holy sacraments, yet are uncertain whether they shall be found sufficiently pure, and worthy of heaven, but rest assured that the Church triumphant and militant will come to their aid after death; comforting for their surviving friends, because they continue to show them their affection in case they should stand in need of their assistance in the purifying flames.—Hence we can never be sufficiently thankful to God for having called us to a religion whose maternal care, charity and zeal goes beyond the confines of our earthly pilgrimage and follows us even after our eyes have been closed in death.

12. How sorely we feel the parting from our dear ones! When the dying husband bids farewell to his

loving wife, recommending himself to her prayers; when affectionate children stand around the death-bed of a dear mother, listening to her parting words; when the death of a dear friend is announced to us, we are overwhelmed with sorrow; the smart of parting well-nigh breaks our heart. At such moments religion, with its heavenly consolation, comes to our aid, exhorting us to lift up our hands in supplication to our brethren of the Church triumphant, to distribute with liberal charity among our suffering dear ones our prayers, alms and suffrages. How beautiful is this faith, how consoling this doctrine of the communion of saints!

Therefore, Christian soul, do not abandon yourself to sorrow; follow the advice of St. Paul, "Do not mourn as those who have no hope." Remember the parting words of St. Monica to her son, St. Augustine, "Remember me at the altar of God!" Glancing at the battlefield of the Machabees, make an act of faith in the existence of Purgatory, saying with the inspired writer, "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from sins."

§ 4. Reason.

13. Reason, when assisted by the higher light of revelation, gives us satisfactory evidence of the existence of a middle state, and, to our consolation, compels us to profess our belief in it. Our dissenting brethren ask: Why is it that souls who departed this life in the state of grace must nevertheless suffer so severely? Why must they, after having devoted their earthly career to true love of God, to the renunciation of all wickedness

and worldly aspirations, after living in self-denial, justice and piety, why must they nevertheless suffer, why are they denied entrance into eternal bliss?—Let the inquirer rest assured that if it were not necessary, God would not permit it; for He finds no pleasure in the misfortune and pain of man, but in his salvation and eternal happiness. As a father will not hurt his child except in case of necessity, thus also our Heavenly Father will not hurt us except it be necessary for our true welfare.

14. God-fearing persons conscientiously avoid mortal sin; yet, either from a want of due vigilance or from human frailty, they commit venial faults which, trifling as they may appear, are punished by God; for Jesus says: "But I say to you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment." (Matth. XII. 36.) True, we know that these venial faults are blotted out by an act of contrition, and that they are remitted by voluntary acts of penance, as well as in confession: but nevertheless, may a person not be overtaken by death before having thus blotted them out, even before thinking of doing so?—Then, when appearing before the tribunal of God, the soul is immediately confronted with its unatoned faults, and remembers with sorrow and terror its delinquencies. It acknowledges as supremely just the sentence of God condemning it to the purifying flames of Purgatory. And how will they fare whose faults approach in dangerous proximity to mortal sin?—It is related of a poor woman that she sometimes covertly permitted her cow to graze in a neighbor's field. It was rarely done, for she was very conscientious. The damage caused amounted to,

perhaps, twenty cents a year. But as she continued the practice for nearly twenty years, the amount finally reached the sum of four dollars. Simple-minded as she was, she never thought of this. She died and appearing before her Judge, was reminded of her indebtness. She is confused, can scarcely believe that she owes such a sum, but nevertheless it is so. In sorrow and contrition she acknowledges her fault, and goes to Purgatory for it.

We so often have little regard for small matters, and are thereby led to contract bad habits. Many a person is accustomed to complain of his hard lot and to regard himself as less fortunate than his neighbors: this is a fault which must be atoned for. Another is over-sensitive, and hangs his head when contradicted; or he is talkative and mixes in every conversation; or he is morose and vindictive, prone to making sharp remarks; another has contracted the habit of making only half genuflections before the Blessed Sacrament, etc., etc.; all these faults must be atoned for. Thus there is a number of faults, bad habits, weaknesses and negligences, of which even good Christians are guilty: they must be atoned for. For of heaven Holy Scripture says: "There shall not enter into it anything defiled." (Apoc. XXI. 27.) Pure as gold chastened by fire must the soul be before it can be admitted to the beatific vision of God.

15. There are others who have been guilty of mortal sins, but returned to God before their death by a true conversion, obtaining forgiveness of their sins and remission of eternal punishment in the sacrament of Penance. Divine justice nevertheless demands satisfaction for these remitted sins; some temporal punish-

ment is due to them. This we see in Moses, Aaron and David, in St. Peter and in St. Mary Magdalen: God had forgiven them their sins together with the eternal punishment due to them; He Himself, or His prophets had assured them of pardon: yet He punished David by the death of the son born to him (III Kings, XII. 14.); He punished Moses and Aaron by denying them entrance into the promised land (Numbers XX. 12.). All these servants of God, though freed from the guilt and eternal punishment of their sins, continued nevertheless to deplore them all their lives, and to atone for the temporal punishment due to them by penance. Yet, who can say whether they ever attained to a point when they could say truly: Now we have destroyed all the evil effects of our sins in ourselves and in others? According to the words of Christ, "Thou shall not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing." (Matth. V. 26.)

Many die when they have scarcely begun their penance, others in the midst of it, others again at its end. Many a one who continued all through life in his wickedness, returns to God on his death-bed; he makes an act of contrition, confesses his sins and receives absolution, and feels happy at the thought that the burden of guilt is lifted from his soul. He dies, and is not condemned; but on his death-bed he neglected voluntary satisfaction and hence he is sentenced to undergo punishment in Purgatory. Entire satisfaction may be rendered in a short time: the Good Thief on the cross rendered sufficient satisfaction in his last moments to be admitted immediately into paradise. But many render but little satisfaction during a long time; numbers of people die without having even

atoned for the sins of their youth: they must atone in Purgatory.

16. There is no doubt that in all these cases each one receives a gracious sentence; that all are saved because they died in the grace of God: but can they enter heaven immediately? No; "there shall not enter into it anything defiled." Hence they are debarred from the beatific vision of God until they shall have been purified, and have rendered satisfaction to Divine Justice. Having glorified His mercy, God now illustrates His justice in them. This being so, we are compelled to admit the existence of a middle state, where the just undergo temporal punishment and render satisfaction. This is impossible either in heaven or in hell. In heaven there is no pain or punishment; in hell torment and punishment is everlasting: there sin is avenged, but not atoned for. Therefore the just, who as yet are not worthy of heaven, but saved from hell, must undergo their purification in a middle state, where God cleanses them by punishment and thus renders them capable of His beatific vision.

Hence reason, praising God's mercy and justice, unites with the Catholic Church in the joyful declaration: "There is a Purgatory, and 'therefore it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.' "

§ 5. The Unanimous Concurrence of all Nations in the Belief in Purgatory.

17. The doctrine of Purgatory being thus consonant with reason, even the heathens professed it; for what is easy of belief is accepted, at least in its fundamental theory, by all nations. Hence they all believed

in the existence of a Supreme Being; so that Plutarch could refer to cities without walls and without laws, but was forced to declare that there were none to be found without belief in a deity to whom they zealously rendered homage and sacrifice. We find the doctrine of the creation of man, of the prevarication of our first parents, of the flood, etc., among the most savage and rude nations. In the same manner, they all had some idea of a state of purification in the next world, however crude and perverted it might be. Thus we find this belief a part of the doctrine of the roaming savage who took with him on his predatory excursions the mortal remains of his father, and of the refined Greek and Roman, who scrupulously adhered to the customs by which he sought to placate the *manes* of the deceased. Widely as mourning customs differed, we find everywhere expiatory sacrifices for the dead, prayers for them: hence the holocausts, the cremations, the libations, offerings placed on tombs, funeral ceremonies, etc., as related in history. The Africans, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Celts and the Slavs professed their belief in purification in a middle state by the doctrine of the migration of souls, and of other modes of atonement. Similar views are found with the Esquimaux, Greenlanders, North American Indian tribes, etc., all concurring in the belief that the soul, on its way to heaven, has to undergo many trials, in overcoming which the living can assist them by prayer, sacrifice and funeral celebrations.

18. Whence this universal sentiment which, though it does not appear everywhere with equal distinctness, yet is common to all? Undoubtedly these distorted views of an everlasting truth are

founded in human reason which believes in the immortality of the soul and distinguishes between absolute purity and total depravity, between human frailty and obstinate perversity.—Plato states the doctrine of paganism on this subject as follows: "As soon as the departed have arrived at the place to which they are conducted by demons, the separation of the just and holy from the wicked takes place. Those found to have led nearly a good life are conducted to the Great Lake to dwell there and atone for their faults till they are absolved. They whose condition is judged to be beyond remedy because of the wickedness of their transgressions, are plunged into Tartarus, whence they are never released. They whose faults have been great, but remedied to some degree, are also plunged into Tartarus; but after remaining a year, the waves throw them ashore and they are transferred back to the Sea of Acherusia. If they are received there by them against whom they offended, their punishment is ended. They, however, that shall be found to have made great progress in holy life, escape all these prisons in the interior of the earth, and proceed to the pure abode above the earth."

The Jews also, though accepting only the Old Testament, believe the doctrine of purification in the next world. They lay great stress on it, and are zealous defenders of its practice. For instance, with them a child is bound to say for a whole year a certain prayer called *Kadis* for his deceased father. When there are no children, strangers are paid to say this prayer. Josephus remarks that this custom is very ancient.

It is impossible that nations of such diversity of faith, morals, laws and languages should concur so

unanimously in this one point, except they all drew from the same source, the fountain of truth. Here we may well say, *Vox populi vox Dei*:—"The voice of the people is God's voice." This voice of all nations and tribes comes to us from ages past, loudly attesting: "There is a Purgatory; and 'it is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.'"

§ 6. Opponents of Purgatory.

19. Whilst reason compels all nations to proclaim their unanimous belief in Purgatory, a certain class of gloomy and proud men, whose dull intelligence admits only of an intercourse through the medium of the senses, presumes to deny this consoling doctrine. It is deplorable to see men calling themselves Christians, and professing to have progressed far in general culture, walking in the darkness of unbelief. Like owls, whose eyes sparkle and shine, but do not see in daytime, such men surround themselves with the semblance of knowledge, deceiving by an appearance of brilliant scientific attainments, yet sitting in the dark. They do not see the day that dawned with Christ and advanced with the propagation of His doctrine till it now shines in meridian splendor. They resemble, says St. Ignatius, the fallen angels; for as these were incited to pride and brought to their fall by their sublime position, thus they are made enemies of Christ, enemies of revealed religion, by their pretended science and sham learning, thus sinking in the estimation of sound reason even below the most uncultured nations. For though it is not clearly demonstrated that the ancient Carthaginians, Egyptians, Celts, Slavs,

etc., believed in hell, yet there is no doubt that they believed in a state of purification after death. Whence this remarkable fact? St. Thomas Aquinas says, that whilst real science renders its possessor humble and makes all things except ourselves appear great, false science puffs up and shows everything as small and insignificant, except self. Hence we know of no other explanation but the senseless fanaticism of such as revolt in rabid haughtiness against the existing order of things, at the same time considering themselves too good, and others too wicked for Purgatory; which spirit is the result of singularity, prejudice and obstinate adhesion to preconceived ideas, and of a mean, narrow mind, intent on measuring divine things by the rule of dulled human perception. Thousands of souls were led into a labyrinth of error and unbelief by pride and presumptuous inquisitiveness regarding the mysteries of religion, by negligence in fulfilling their religious duties, by wickedness of life, by the reading of bad books and papers, by promiscuous association with scoffers at religion, with infidels, and with others whose company endangers faith.

20. And as even some so-called Catholics are presumptuous enough to doubt the consoling doctrine of Purgatory, because, deluded by false logic, they believe the Church to be wrong on this point, we give a brief, comprehensive statement of the errors concerning Purgatory; in order that they may have a chance to recognize more easily their indefensible position, rise above their prejudices, and put to flight the serpent of pride and error.

The Gnostics of the first centuries of Christianity believed that the human soul is destined to free itself

by degrees from the dominion of sensualism by going through a kind of purification here on earth. These heretics retained but little of Christianity, and their system had no place for Purgatory. For according to them the soul, once freed from the body and purified by earthly sufferings alone, returns to God in the realms of light, whilst everything else is engulfed in the darkness of eternal night.

In the fourth century, Aerius, a follower of the heresiarch Arius, called the doctrine of prayer for the dead immoral, claiming that it caused men to abandon themselves to vice and sin in the presumptuous hope that they were enabled, by gifts of money, to obtain the prayers and good works of others to escape punishment.

In the twelfth century, the Waldenses were at variance amongst themselves concerning the doctrine of Purgatory. The Albigenses and Catharers, who followed Gnostic views, and denied a future life in general almost universally, were logically bound to reject Purgatory. In southern France, the adherents of the apostate, Peter de Bruis, denied Purgatory, because they regarded themselves too good, and others too wicked for it.

21. Until then the enemy of God made use only of one or the other of the objections to Purgatory hitherto mentioned, in order to gain adherents opposing Purgatory. In the so-called Reformation of the sixteenth century, however, all these objections were united into one heresy denying the existence of Purgatory. For fifteen centuries the Church had offered up the Sacrifice of Expiation for the Suffering Souls, when Luther, an apostate monk, disturbed her peace and assailed

her sacrifice by divulging a new doctrine. Of a morose and bitter disposition, he attacked the Catholic doctrine of indulgences, thus assailing the clemency of his spiritual Mother. Logically, he was soon led to deny the efficacy of her intercession, thus robbing the faithful of the consolation of her prayers after death by declaring that man, once justified, had no need of satisfying Divine Justice either in this world or in the next. Hence he denied the efficacy of prayer for the dead, and consequently the existence of Purgatory. But as he thus proclaimed a doctrine rejected both by Catholic faith and by reason, a doctrine that aimed at the same time at being consonant with divine truth and conniving at the sinful inclinations of man, hence Luther wavered in his position and in his teaching. Lies are unstable, but truth remains steadfast for ever. "The lip of truth shall be steadfast for ever; but he that is a hasty witness frameth a lying tongue." (Prov. xii. 19.) The Protestant theologian, Fritschel, in his "Review for Lutheran Theology and Church," mentions the conflicting views of Luther concerning the doctrine of Purgatory as follows: In 1518 and 1519 the "Reformer" declares the existence of Purgatory as undeniable, and insists on its acceptance. In the following years, until 1530, his views underwent a change. He wished to retain Purgatory, but was not willing that it should remain an article of faith, "because," he maintained, "its existence can neither be proved, nor ought it to be denied." Then, in 1530, Luther published a "Denial of Purgatory;" a "powerful argument against this error," as Fritschel calls it. In the Schmalkaldian Articles of 1537, the heresiarch calls Purgatory a "Devil's Mask." Never-

theless, he again wavers on other occasions, and in 1543, permits the insertion of prayers for the dead in the official edition of his Church Directory. No wonder that Fritschel repeatedly calls Luther's position "remarkable." It must appear "remarkable" to every person capable of reasoning, no less so than the following prayer taken from his Directory: "O God, if the soul is in a condition to be assisted, I beseech Thee to be gracious towards it." Still more remarkable it is, that so many persons adhere to his wavering doctrine.

Calvin calls Purgatory "a dastardly invention of Satan, a blasphemy against Christ which annihilates His cross." Yet he concedes that prayer for the dead is an ancient and pious custom, and says that the souls of the just are detained until the last day in the bosom of Abraham. (*Lib. Inst.* III. 5.)

Luther's illogical error was the result of wounded pride, nourished by intemperance like fire is fed by fuel. Smothering reason through exciting the passions, he aroused in his followers the seven-headed hydra of vice, causing them to show less logic than the Esquimaux and Greenlanders, by rejecting the consoling doctrine of a middle state in the next world.

The views and speculations concerning Purgatory, which originated in the diverging doctrines of Protestantism, are too manifold to be noted here. It is sufficient to mention that some of its adherents admit heaven and hell alone, others a place of purification and heaven, others again no hell and no purgatory, but heaven alone.

22. Nevertheless there are, and always have been, a great many dissenters from the Catholic Church who, intent on living justly and uprightly, cultivate a pro-

found logical religious sentiment, and hence agree with the learned Protestant Leibnitz who says: "It always was the the teaching of the Church that they that have departed this life, though acceptable to God through Christ and therefore elected to eternal life, must sometimes suffer natural punishment or purification for their sins, especially if they have not cleansed themselves sufficiently from their faults while on earth. True, the holy Fathers do not agree as to the mode of purification; but nearly all agree in the opinion that after this life a paternal punishment or purification, whatever its nature may be, will take place, by which the souls, after their departure from the body, are enlightened, and then, convinced of the imperfection of their past life and of the turpitude of sin, are filled with sorrow, and themselves desire it, unwilling to be admitted to the height of beatitude without having undergone it." And he concludes: "It always was a doctrine of the Church that we should pray for the dead, because they receive assistance by our prayer."

Collier, also a Protestant, remarks: "Prayer for the dead is one of the most ancient and best authenticated practices of religion. It quickens the belief in the immortality of the soul, draws the veil of darkness from the grave, and joins this world with the next. Had it been retained, most likely we should not have experienced so much scepticism and unbelief amongst us. I can not find a reason why a dissenting Church, which can not claim supernatural gifts, and is quite foreign to the early ages of Christianity, has rejected, or permitted the neglect of, a custom which is not condemned." True, the so-called Reformers, if they would be logical, could not admit Purgatory; but it was a

rather hazardous proceeding to draw, by mere deduction, a negation of truths so firmly rooted in faith and so consonant with reason and sentiment. Hence the untenable position of Protestantism, which loudly proclaims to the world that despite its doctrinal negation, many of its adherents unite with the Catholic Church in declaring: "There is a Purgatory; 'it is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from sins.'"

§ 7. Uninterrupted Tradition of the Church and Purgatory.

23. Protestants admit that the belief in purification after death, and the custom of praying for the dead, were both universal in the Church for fifteen centuries. And indeed, if we would but go to the trouble of examining the pages of history, we should find the view correct, as a few proofs from the writings of the holy Fathers, the inscriptions in the catacombs and the decrees of the councils of the Church will show.

St. Chrysostom, in his third homily, says: "The apostles did not ordain without good reason a commemoration of the departed to be made during the celebration of the sacred mysteries; for from it the deceased draw great gain and help. Why should our prayers for them not placate God, when, besides the priest, the whole people stand with uplifted hands whilst the august Victim is present on the altar? True, it is offered only for such as departed hence in the faith."—St. Gregory of Nyssa writes: "The apostles and disciples of Christ have handed down to us what since has obtained the force of law everywhere in the Church of God, namely that the memory of those

that died in the true faith be recalled in the celebration of the sacred and illustrious mystery."—In the fourth century, St. Jerome presents to our view the pious Pammachius mourning over the mortal remains of his consort, less with tears than with prayer and by alms. St. Augustine relates with touching emotion the parting words of his mother, St. Monica: "Lay this body anywhere; be not concerned about that. Only this I beg of you, that wheresoever you be, you make remembrance of me at the Lord's altar."—Even as early as the second century, Tertullian wrote: "On the anniversaries of the dead we offer the Holy Sacrifice for the departed. Even though Scripture did not warrant this, the custom originates in tradition; it was confirmed by universal adoption and sanctioned by faith."

A touching proof of the belief that the living are able to help the dead is found in the history of St. Perpetua. She beheld her own brother Dinocrates, seven years of age, in the torments of Purgatory. The saint continued assiduously in prayer for him, and in a new vision saw his pain gradually lessened, until he finally appeared to her with a luminous countenance leaving the place of his suffering to engage in childish sport. "I then awoke," she remarks, "and knew that my brother's punishment was over."

24. The catacombs, the subterranean tombs of the martyrs, give eloquent testimony of the belief in Purgatory, which is all the more impressive because it leads us back to the very cradle of the Church, to the bloody persecutions overcome by the faith and virtue of thousands and thousands of victims. A number of renowned cemeteries, for instance that of SS. Peter and Paul, of St. Priscilla, St. Domitilla, etc., date back to

the first century, to the very time of the apostles, and the others are as old as the second and third century. In the numerous incriptions found there, abundant proof of the belief in Purgatory is expressed in prayers for the departed. For instance: "Here, dearest son, thy life has come to an end. But Thee, O Heavenly Father, we implore to have mercy, to take pity on the sufferings of our dear one, through Christ, Our Lord." —"To Lucifera! Whosoever of the brethren chances to read this, let him pray to God to take unto Himself her holy and pure spirit."—"Eternal light shine upon thee, Timothea, in Christ!"—Verily, the reading of these few specimens among the hundreds of inscriptions dating from the first centuries, present to us in a true mirror the reflection of the faith of the Church of our own times.

But how strange! Dissenters ask us to regard Purgatory as a mere conjecture, which received its form and shape by SS. Gregory and Augustine, and by later councils. In return, the Church points to her constant tradition, as embodied in her ordinances and customs, and triumphantly vindicates the doctrine of Purgatory by her councils.

25. Long ago, the Council of Carthage recommended prayers for the dead; the same was done by the Roman Synod, in 502; by the Synod of Orleans, in 533; by the Council of Braga, in 563; by the Council of Toledo, in 675; by the Synod of Chalons, in 813; by the Synod of Worms, in 868.—The second Council of Lyons, in 1274, says: "The Holy Roman Church declares and teaches, that when truly penitent souls die in charity before they have atoned for their faults of commission and omission by worthy fruits of pen-

ance, they are purified after death in the torments of Purgatory."—The Council of Florence, in 1439, states the same doctrine in the very words of the Lyonese Council. Finally, the Council of Trent, Session VI. 22, 25., declares formally, first, that the faithful are able to assist the souls detained in Purgatory by their prayer and by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Moreover, it threatens with excommunication those who affirm that after receiving the grace of justification the penitent sinner's debt and eternal punishment are remitted in such a manner, that no temporal punishment remains to be undergone in Purgatory.

Thus the belief in Purgatory is clearly and unmistakably expressed in the writings of the holy Fathers, by the testimony of the Catacombs, and the decrees of the Councils. Besides eternal heaven for undefiled souls; besides everlasting hell for souls departing with the guilt of mortal sin on them, there is a middle state—Purgatory. Hence: "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins."

§ 8. Divine Revelation and Purgatory.

26. The Council of Trent, assembled for the defence and vindication of the ancient faith, branded the audacious innovators of the sixteenth century with the note of excommunication, condemning their nefarious doctrine, and reaffirming Catholic belief in Purgatory. By the declaration of this dogma the Church did not invent a new doctrine, but simply sustained and made an authentic declaration of the faith founded on ancient tradition and on Holy Scripture. She set the seal of her divine authority on it, sustained it by

her authoritative declaration, and thus consummated our consolation by her authentic evidence for the existence of Purgatory.

In Holy Scripture we find this evidence even in the Book of Genesis. It informs us that Joseph, on his father's death, ordered the Egyptians to hold a mourning celebration of seventy days, and a funeral celebration of seven days. In the First Book of Kings we read that the inhabitants of Jabez Galaad fasted seven days at the death of Saul, Jonathan and Abner. The learned divines Suarez and Bellarmine declare in conformity with the holy Fathers, that these practices are not to be understood simply as expressions of mourning alone, but must be regarded also as suffrages for the dead. If fasting was nothing but an expression of sorrow, it is difficult to explain why David fasted during the illness of his child, but ceased to fast immediately after its death. It is evident that he was of the opinion that a continuance of his fast was no longer to any purpose, because the child, having died in innocence, was no longer in need of prayer, and good works. The royal prophet describes in a touching manner the doctrine of Purgatory when he refers to the ineffable bliss of those souls that, having passed through the flood and fire of affliction, at length have found the long desired deliverance. The prophet Micheas takes comfort in advance in the consolations of Purgatory, saying: "I will bear the wrath of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him, until He judge my cause and execute judgment for me. He will bring me forth into the light." (Mich. VII. 9.) Hence the declaration of Ecclesiasticus (VII. 37): "A gift hath grace in the sight of all the living; and re-

strain not grace from the dead."—One hundred and fifty years before the light of the Gospel shed its saving rays on the world, belief in Purgatory finds unmistakable expression in the history of the victorious Machabee, Judas. This renowned hero, having lost a great number of warriors in battle, is not content with honoring them by a pompous burial: he orders a collection to be made, and sends the proceeds—twelve hundred drachms of silver—to Jerusalem, to have sacrifice offered for the deceased. "For," adds the inspired writer, "if he had not hoped that they who were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins." (II. Mach. XII. 44—46.) Holy Scripture itself, then, draws from the action of this chieftain the conclusion that Purgatory exists, and that our prayers and sacrifices are accepted in suffrage for the release of the departed.

27. Our Lord Himself, though He was most zealous in correcting abuses, and well knew that the Jews prayed for the dead, not only did not interfere with this practice, but confirmed it. For He said, "And whosoever shall speak a word against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him neither in this world, nor in the world to come." (Matth. XII. 32.) From these words SS. Augustine, Gregory the Great, Bernard, the Venerable Bede and others conclude as follows: Whatsoever may be the nature of this speaking against the Holy Ghost mentioned here as an unpardonable sin, whether it be understood as referring to the obstinacy of the Jews or

of the unbelievers in resisting the acknowledged truth: one certain, clear and indisputable fact follows from this passage of the gospel by the very exception made in it: it proves convincingly that certain sins *are* forgiven in the next world. Now this forgiveness is not obtainable in heaven, because sin does not gain admittance there, nor in hell, whence there is no redemption. There is only one possibility: these sins are forgiven in Purgatory—hence there *is* a Purgatory.

Moreover, Our Lord exhorts us: "Be at an agreement with thy adversary betimes, whilst thou art in the way with him: lest perhaps the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Amen I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing." (Math. v. 25, 26.) Many holy Fathers, among them Origen, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose and others, declare that this passage is to be understood not only as referring to a place of eternal punishment, but also to one of temporal atonement in the next world, because deliverance is promised to those that "repay the last farthing."

28. The doctrine of the Apostles agrees with that of their divine Master. Like Him, they never reproved the Jews for believing in a middle state, nor did they ever prohibit prayers for the dead. St. Paul (I. Cor. xv. 29.) mentioning the Jewish custom of pious practices for the dead, refers to these as to a baptism, or religious rite, and draws therefrom the conclusion of a future resurrection. He writes, "What shall they do that are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not again at all? why are they then baptized for them?" Thus he teaches us that the custom of praying for the dead

is one beneficial to them, and hence to be retained by the Christians. But if there were only heaven and hell in the next world, such prayers would be unprofitable.

St. Paul affirms this doctrine still more explicitly when he teaches that there are faithful who attain heaven by fire, or, to use his own words, they "shall be saved, yet so as by fire." (I. Cor. III. 15.) According to the Apostle there are such as make Christ the foundation of their salvation, but build on this foundation an edifice of wood, hay or stubble, that is, they believe in Christ, but mix many imperfections with their good works. "If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work burn, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." (I. Cor. III. 15.) "The fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is," whether "gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble." (Ib. 12. 13.) The holy Fathers remark that by gold, silver and precious stones are meant good works, by wood, hay and stubble venial sins and imperfections. Hence St. Augustine says, "Punish me in Thy wrath, that I may be cleansed in this world, and so transformed that I shall not stand in need of the purifying flames like those that are 'saved as if by fire.' Whence this? Because they built on the foundation with wood, hay and stubble here below. Had they built with gold, silver and precious stones, they would be safe from both fires, not only from the everlasting one that shall torment the wicked forever, but also from the one that purifies those that are saved by fire." The learned commentator Allioli, explaining the above words of St. Paul, says: "Remark well, the fire of which the Apostle speaks cannot be understood to mean the tribu-

lations of this world; for he speaks of a fire burning on the day of judgment, consequently after the time of this life. It cannot be understood to mean the great examination by the Judge, for you are not only examined, but made to burn, so that you suffer by fire. It cannot mean the fire of hell; because, he that suffers by the fire mentioned is saved after suffering loss. It can be understood only as meaning the cleansing fire after death called Purgatory, which burns the soul departed in imperfections, during the time of cleansing, and shall be extinguished at the general judgment in the destruction of the world." Our works, then, shall be subject to examination; they shall be cleansed from every base alloy in the flames enkindled by divine wrath, the same as gold and silver are purified in the crucible of the refiner. Hence the learned Bellarmine remarks, "It is a doctrine held in common by all divines, that in this passage the words, 'by fire' are to be understood as referring to a temporal fire of purification, to which they are sentenced after death, who, according to the verdict of their particular judgment, have built with wood, hay and stubble. This explanation is not only warranted by the text, but agrees with the general opinion of the Fathers." The renowned theologian then adduces the testimony of SS. Cyprian, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Gregory, Anselm, Thomas, Bonaventure, etc.

St. Paul himself gave us the example of praying for the dead. Having received hospitality at Rome in the house of Onesiphorus, he reminds his disciple Timothy of it, saying: "The Lord give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, because he hath often refreshed me, and hath not been ashamed of my chain . . . The Lord

grant unto him to find mercy of the Lord in that day." (II. Tim. I. 16. 18.) Allioli remarks: "The Apostle does not send greeting to Onesiphorus when speaking of his past merits, but to his family. For the deserving man himself he prays that the Lord grant mercy unto him on the day of judgment. Hence it is apparent that at that time the good man was dead, and that the Apostle teaches us by his example to offer up suffrages and prayers for the souls of those that died in the Lord: this, however, can be done only if we believe in a middle state—Purgatory."

29. Hence the existence of Purgatory, demonstrated and proved as it is by reason, revelation and theological evidence, is an accepted Catholic dogma. It is a doctrine contained so unmistakably clear in the sources of revelation, in Scripture and Tradition, and is presented so concisely as the outcome of faith in eternal reward and punishment, that it would be a Catholic dogma even if it had not been declared as such by the authority of the Church. It is a dogma because there is indisputable evidence that the whole Church, in all ages and in all countries, accepted it as such, and because it was declared as such by the solemn declaration of the Church's supreme teaching authority.

The doctrine of Purgatory does away with the foolhardy doctrine of the soul's mortality; it convinces us that death is but a transient occurrence. "In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their departure was taken for misery . . . Afflicted in a few things, in many they shall be well rewarded, because God hath tried them, and found them worthy of Himself" (Wisd. III. 2. 5.), so that He will not destroy their souls. "My soul shall live." (Ps. CXVIII. 175.) For God

solves the mortal bonds of the just only to lead them to the place of purification. "As gold in the furnace He hath proved them, and as a holocaust He hath received them" (Wisd. III. 6.) to open for them the portals of the abode of refreshment, light and peace. "For grace and peace is to His elect." (Wisd. III. 9.)

We love to hear this doctrine. It brings us consolation in affliction; it renders easy the sacrifices we have to make for virtue; it moves us to joyous praise of the Lord's justice and mercy; it makes us love our faith; it elevates us above ourselves and transports us into the land of the living, that is, into the regions of immortality, into the Church suffering and triumphant. On the other hand, denial of this doctrine brings death. Bellarmine observes: "The doctrine of the existence of Purgatory is so catholic a dogma, that they who nevertheless deny it assuredly have to fear not Purgatory, but rather the flames of hell."

And thus we hear faith and nature, all nations and all ages proclaim for the welfare of mankind: "It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins."

CHAPTER II.

The Condition of the Suffering Souls in Purgatory.

§ 9. The Spiritual Condition of the Suffering Souls.

30. There is a middle state—a state of purification—after this life: this is a natural claim of the human heart's affection, acknowledged unanimously by all nations, but of which we receive certainty and a complete and correct conception only by revealed religion. The souls of those who died in the state of grace, but were not found sufficiently pure to enter the heavenly Jerusalem, are sentenced to this state. The most dreaded time for man, dreaded even by saintly servants of God, is the hour of death, that decisive hour on which depends heaven or hell. At this dangerous hour our guardian angels are a most potent help for us. These spirits, endowed with supernatural intelligence and privileges, servants of God and protectors of man, assist and encourage us. They put to flight the evil spirits, and are the first to receive the parting soul and conduct it to God. Therefore the Church in her recommendation of a departing soul says, "Go forth, Christian soul, from this world, in the name of the angels and archangels." The holy angels are invited to receive the departing soul and to conduct it before the throne of God. This is also expressed in the prayer of the Church: "Let St. Michael, the archangel,

prince of heavenly hosts, receive him. Let the holy angels of God come forth to meet him and conduct him to the city of the heavenly Jerusalem." After the soul has appeared before the tribunal of God, sentence is passed, and then it goes to the abode decreed by divine justice. St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure say that it is probable that the souls sentenced to temporal punishment are conducted to the place of punishment by good angels, and there begin a new and abstergent life. We add, in a few general sentences, a description of this spiritual life of the souls in Purgatory, as well as it can be given.

31. The prerogatives and dignity of man in this world are founded in his spiritual being, in his immortal soul. By this his ennobled, rational and free nature man is endowed with the faculty of thought, of judgment, of liberty and will. Is it, then, not apparent at first view, that amongst all beings of visible creation man predominates and is the most prominent, that everything else is created for his service? All things must bow before man's power, because reason elevates him above the whole material world, if he knows how to bring it under his dominion. The soul's power of cognition at the time of its departure from the body remains its property also in Purgatory, but a new degree of cognition is, generally speaking, not added, for the aspect of visible creation with its manifold wonders is shut off from it. The soul is in prison, under punishment. The learned Bautz writes: "With St. Augustine theological writers are of the opinion, that the Suffering Souls have cognizance of many things that specially interest them. As the holy doctor remarks, the souls of the deceased are beyond the

reach of earthly influences, and as a rule remain so, although their affection for us is not diminished. Whatever of mundane affairs interests them can be brought to their notice in various ways. They are informed of it partly by other souls who depart this life at a later period, partly through the intervention of angels, partly by special divine revelation, partly also by being permitted to re-appear among us." The natural perceptive powers of a soul are, therefore, as a rule restricted to its place of captivity. It has a direct cognition of itself, and of the other spirits into whose company it was transferred. According to Bautz the soul, at its separation from the body, is endowed with all the faculties corresponding to its new phase of existence, and is thus enabled to communicate with the other souls and with the heavenly spirits that appear in the abode of torment.

32. Even during mortal life the soul of man is capable of elevating itself into the realm of the supernatural; it is impressed with ideas imperceptible to the bodily senses so as even to entertain a conception of the infinite. Instructed by revelation, it becomes enthusiastic in the service of the true, the beautiful, the good, and the divine; it finds a pleasure in Christian virtue in comparison with which all other enjoyments become insipid. The souls in Purgatory retain possession of this supernatural cognition. It is not an intuition, but essentially a species of faith that has become part of their existence. Some points of doctrine which are articles of faith in the Church militant are such no longer for the Church suffering, because to the latter they have become matters of cognition, intuition or experience. Particular judgment, Pur-

gatory, the guardian angels, perhaps also satan and hell, are part of their experience. Other mysteries of faith, however, are veiled to the Suffering Souls the same as to us.

The Creator endowed human nature with such glorious prerogatives and revealed His paternal Providence to man so manifestly, that he will be the most blessed creature for all eternity, provided he attains his final destiny. The Suffering Souls in Purgatory have as yet not attained it, hence they yearn for it, full of hope and confidence. They feel the pangs of an insatiable hunger and thirst, and are consumed by a longing for essential life, beauty and truth, for imperishable greatness, for eternal happiness and glory in God. Like faith and hope, the Suffering Souls also possess charity. As Suarez remarks, the Suffering Soul, though not yet enjoying the contemplation of God, is nevertheless possessed of a fixed measure of infused divine love, corresponding to its merit, which latter can longer be increased.

33. The course of this life once finished, the time of forbearance, mercy and merit is over. Then God is no longer our Father, but our Judge, our severe Judge, who sentences us to pay the last farthing. Personally, the Suffering Souls cannot do anything to escape their wretchedness and misery. For them the time of labor, when they were able not only to increase their merit, but also to atone for their sins, is over. The darkness of that night has overtaken them, "when no man can work" (John IX. 4.) for his own profit. To them are applicable the words of Scripture: "If the tree fall to the south or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there it shall be." (Eccli. XI. 3.) The soul's

eternal destiny is not only decided, but it moreover can no longer use the time during which it is debarred from entering eternal glory to increase its own merits. The Suffering Souls no longer have time to do penance for their sins, or to increase their merit, or to pray to God for their own deliverance, or to hasten their admittance to eternal bliss. Theirs is a time of suffering, of suffering without merit, of suffering without the possibility of relieving themselves.

Just as the time of merit is over for the Suffering Souls, so also is their time of combat past. They are forever exempt from probation, temptation, and since the possibility of committing sin all who die united in charity with God have finished their course, fought the good fight and ended their pilgrimage. With St. John Damascene the holy Fathers and ecclesiastical writers say, "Death is for man what the fall was for the angels."

34. The doctrine, that the Suffering Souls can do nothing for their own relief, is certain in that sense, that they cannot acquire new merit to be applied in atonement for their sins. They cannot themselves do anything to render satisfaction to God. If these holy Souls, remarks Suarez, could obtain their release by some act of satisfaction, they would liberate themselves in a very short time simply by making an act of perfect contrition. Nevertheless, this same author concedes that they can move God by their prayer to apply to them the intercession of the faithful on earth; that they can invoke their angels for some refreshment and mitigation of their torments; and lastly that they can entreat these heavenly spirits to incite the faithful to a greater zeal in the performance of good works in

their behalf, which office these good spirits fulfil most readily and of their own accord. Bellarmine calls this opinion of Suarez not only probable, but indubitable, and argues that the Suffering Souls pray for themselves in the manner described. Gregory of Valencia, adducing the authority of the renowned Alexander of Hales, is still more positive. "I maintain," he says, "that the souls in Purgatory pray for themselves and implore God to deliver them from their torments by some means ordained by His eternal Providence, perhaps by the intercession of the faithful on earth. This is the doctrine of Alexander of Hales, who relies on the authority of Pope Gregory the Great. For if, as the latter says, the souls in Purgatory invoke the aid of the faithful, they also, presumably, implore God to impel the faithful to come to their assistance."

35. If the Suffering Souls can pray successfully for themselves; if, as we shall show later, they can intercede and obtain favors for us, as is maintained by Suarez and St. Catharine of Genoa: then it is probable that they also console and succor each other to the full extent of their charity, as far as they are permitted to do so by God. Or does it seem improbable that, impelled by an unselfish and sublime charity, they voluntarily renounce the suffrages of their relatives and friends in favor of others, thus suffering one for the other? True charity is forgetful of self, as St. Paul remarks; and this same apostle is himself an example of this charity. Like Moses he desired to become a reprobate, if he might thereby save his brethren. Tertullian relates the same also of the early Christians. To save their brethren they exposed themselves to every danger, they suffered stripes, fire and death. If charity

achieved such triumphs on earth, may we not expect the same, and more, of the charity of these just and holy souls? Their charity is undoubtedly pure and unselfish; they love God in His creatures. The holy angels watch over us, not for the sake of adding to their merit, but for the love of God. God's own love for us is an unselfish one, proceeding from His pure, superabundant and infinite charity for us. "Indeed," says Binet, "suffering for the welfare of another is an act worthy of those magnanimous and charitable souls who are less sensitive of the purifying flames than of the fire of divine love." And Bautz concludes: "Whether such a mutual devotedness is actually permitted by the order of divine Providence in Purgatory, and to what extent, is beyond our knowledge." Certain it is, that by their own act the Suffering Souls cannot help themselves, nor assist others: we must aid them by our good works.

36. Confirmed in the grace and love of God, the souls in Purgatory are the adopted children of our heavenly Father, infinitely surer of this adoption than the most pious and saintly souls during earthly life. Though their conscience inform the latter, that they are "if sons, heirs also, heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. VIII. 17.), they are nevertheless not sure to remain such, because they are in danger every moment of losing the grace of God by sin, and of becoming children of damnation. But a soul in Purgatory, being out of this danger, has no longer any cause for fear. It is assured of remaining an elect child of God forever, and certain to possess the heritage of heaven. Though such an elect spouse of Christ is

detained in the most terrible torments, and is not permitted to hasten to the wedding-feast, because admission thereto must be purchased by the satisfaction due to the sanctity and justice of God, she nevertheless dwells in the realms of peace, resting in Christ Our Lord, as the Church testifies in the commemoration of the dead in Holy Mass. The soul, though suffering grievously, suffers with such resignation and conformity to the will of God, that it experiences neither confusion nor terror. It is strong in patience; pain does not deaden its love of God, and therefore does not disturb its peace, which is firmly established in the hope of future glory.

§ 10. Spiritual Torments of the Suffering Souls.

37. Convinced of the existence of Purgatory, and having reviewed in spirit some features of the condition of those detained therein, let us now devote our pious attention to the contemplation of the abode itself in which these souls are sentenced to dwell, and consider the extent of their misery.

Although nothing definite can be said concerning the means applied in Puratory in order to effect that purification which renders the souls worthy of the beatific vision of God, we are nevertheless reminded by Holy Scripture that "it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebr. x. 31.) Revelation affords us no clue to the nature of the punishments of Purgatory; we know, however, that they are two-fold: a pain of loss, and a pain of sense. On both let us hear the common and more probable opinion of theologians.

38. As the soul, by its noblest inspirations, is drawn irresistibly to God, therefore the exclusion from the beatific vision of God is the supreme, the most excruciating pain that it can endure. To understand this, at least in part, we must consider the anguish of a heart that has lost the object of its affection. In such a heart love and grief are united, for true love cannot but suffer by the absence of its object. Lovers yearn for each other's presence, pining away in sighs and tears. Not unfrequently they commit suicide because the one will not outlive the other. Asylums for the insane give eloquent testimony of the sad consequences of unrequited love.—Now man is not created for this world, but for God. His inmost nature, his noblest and sublimest faculties and powers impel him and draw him on towards God. True, we mortals do not behold God, and, being devoted wholly to the perishable things of this world, we are quite unconcerned thereat. The distracting turmoil of the world, its unhallowed enjoyments, the profane bonds binding us to it, the overwhelming cares with which we overload ourselves—all this combines to compensate us, so to say, for the loss of God's vision. But in the same measure as man frees himself from these fetters his spirit ascends by the wings of insuperable desire to the supreme, all-beautiful Being. With some saints this spiritual ardor of love was so great, that their heart, their countenance, their whole body glowed with and reflected a physical heat. It had this effect on St. Peter Alcantara, St. Catharine of Genoa, St. Magdalen of Pazzis, St. Stanislas Kostka and others. The more they became convinced of the supremacy of things heavenly and divine over things earthly, the

more ardently they became desirous of attaining them, a yearning much greater than that resulting from mere human affection.

As soon as we have deposed the robe of mortality in death, as soon as the boundless circle of eternity has received us, the soul, in its solitude and forsakenness, is seized with an invincible desire to be admitted to the beatific vision of God. Such souls have been ransomed and cleansed by the Blood of Christ; they have the indelible mark of God's grace; the imperishable crown of victory is prepared for them, for they are faithful, holy souls that love God alone. These souls, destined for heaven and sentenced to the darkness of a disconsolate solitude, are seized with the most ardent desire of seeing their God, and they see Him not! Their torment is so much the greater, the more they are conscious of the supreme beatitude of being admitted to His vision. Whoever once had the experience of the agonies of homesickness may form a faint idea of the extent of their sorrow. Hence St. Augustine exclaims, "Give me a loving soul: it will comprehend what I intend to convey."

39. Besides the pain arising from unrequited desire, deprivation of the beatific vision of God causes another great torment to the Suffering Souls: this results from the consciousness that it is not God's fault, but their own, that they cannot enter heaven; it is a consequence of their sins. Thus their sins are brought back in all their hideousness to their spiritual view, and indescribable sorrow fills them. When Absalom was called back from his flight and permitted to enter Jerusalem, his father David would not let him come into his presence, but said, "Let him return into

his house, and let him not see my face."—"And Absolom dwelt two years in Jerusalem and saw not the king's face. He sent therefore to Joab to send him to the king . . . . I beseech thee, therefore, that I may see the face of the king: and if he be mindful of my iniquity, let him kill me. And Absolom was called for and went in to the king and prostrated himself on the ground before him." (II Kings XIV. 24—33.) So great was his sorrow at having offended his father.—It is related of St. Aloysius that he swooned away with sorrow for his few and insignificant faults.—St. Stanislas fainted when he heard immodest words; St. Oringa was attacked with nausea when obliged to listen to them.

The Suffering Souls are called to the nuptials of the Lamb; a splendid throne is prepared for them; they have escaped all dangers threatening their salvation; their loving desire of seeing God is most vehement. With St. Paul, they often repeat, "Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. VIII. 24.) "Having a desire to be disolved and be with Christ." (Philip. I. 23.) The veil of flesh which separated them from their Beloved has fallen: now they shall see Him and share His bliss! But, alas, the Lord remembers their misdeeds; the Most Holy One delivers them to the tormentors; because they are in need of purification, they are sentenced to the dark prison, where they must languish until they shall have paid "the last farthing." At the end of their earthly pilgrimage, at the very threshold of heaven, they are debarred from its entrance through their own fault: oh, how bitter a sorrow, how sad a condition!

40. Yet the punishment is not alike for all souls. God can join with it a species of consolation; He can mitigate it by the hope of a speedy deliverance. Severe as the pain of loss is, its infliction concerns a loving soul, a soul willing to suffer and to atone in order to be made worthy of being united with the object of its eternal love. To such a loving soul God grants the necessary strength to bear its great trial with patience. Sure of the complacency of their Beloved, the Suffering Souls joyfully bear every pain of Purgatory with resignation to the will of God. With St. Ignatius the Martyr they say: "Let the demons exhaust all their power in me, if I but possess Christ!" Thus, undoubtedly, they are not without consolation; but their consolation is mixed with sorrow. Purgatory is not a place of reward, but of punishment.

We read in *St. Benedict's Stimmen*, 1880: "A soul appearing to St. Mechtildis declared to her: 'I feel no pain, except that I am debarred from the vision of God, whom I long to see so ardently that if all the longings of all men on earth were united, they would seem nothing in comparison to the desire that consumes me'."—Thus the Souls in Purgatory suffer the whole burden of the pain resulting from their separation from God, and from their unrequited desire of beholding Him, and this in so high a degree, that a pious religious, after an apparition he had, declared that he would suffer a thousand deaths for his bitterest enemy in order to save him from Purgatory, because its torments so greatly exceed the pains of this earth. The Suffering Souls' thirst for God is more intense than the panting hart's longing for water; yet it shall not be quenched until they shall have paid "the last farthing."

§ 11. The Suffering Souls' Pain of Sense.

41. Another kind of punishment to which the souls in Purgatory are subjected consists in the *pain of sense.* We cannot doubt its reality, knowing as we do that God even in this world makes use of various kinds of sufferings in order to purify a soul pleasing to Him. Temporary deprivation of God's vision is the soul's punishment in Purgatory for having, on earth, turned away from God, its supreme good; but the soul also sinned by turning to created things and enjoying in their possession a spurious delight and satisfaction. The punishment for this illicit sensual enjoyment is a sensible pain, by which the unlawful delectation is atoned for. According to the general opinion of theologians, the pain of sense consists in fire. In his work *De Civitate Dei,* Book XXI., St. Augustine says of the pain of sense in the next world: "If the fire be not immaterial like the pain of the soul, but material, causing us to smart only when we touch it, then the question may be asked: how can it constitute a punishment for spirits?" And he answers: "It is not necessary to engage in a long disputation or argument on this question. For what prohibits us to believe that spirits can be made sensitive albeit in a miraculous manner, of a material fire, when the spirit of man, which is truly immaterial, can be inclosed in the human body during natural life and after the day of judgment? The spirits, then, though having no body, will be bound to a material fire, experiencing pain from it, but giving it no nourishment. For also that other manner by which spirits are now joined to bodies, is truly wonderful and above

the conception of man, and yet it is what constitutes man. I might say the spirits burn without having a body, the same as Dives burned in hell when he exclaimed, 'I am tormented in this flame'. . . . But that hell, which is called by Scripture a lake of fire and brimstone, shall be a material fire as was declared by eternal truth." Theologians, with St. Thomas, teach that by divine co-operation fire exerts its influence on the souls physically and really; it confines the soul to a certain space, and limits its activity there in a manner most violent and unnatural. The pain of sense, then, consists principally in a purifying, material fire. Although the suffering souls are destined for heaven, they are nevertheless denied admission there because in the heavenly Jerusalem only the purest and finest gold is accepted. The Suffering Souls, though gold, are still defiled by the dross of the earth from which they were created. Therefore the Lord detains them in a fiery furnace, there to purify them, like unrefined gold, of all dross and spurious material. "And He shall sit refining and cleansing the silver, and He shall purify the sons of Levi and refine them as gold, and as silver." (Malach. III. 3.) This fire is a most fierce, penetrating and all-consuming flame; a fire whose power immeasurably exceeds the strength of natural fire; a fire which causes infinitely greater pain than all pains, torments and penitential works of this world; for the souls are no longer limited in their power of endurance by the body, which can suffer only to a certain degree without succumbing. The Latin Church, through Pope Eugene and the Fathers of the Council of Florence, was about to declare as a dogma that the fire of Purgatory was a

material one, because this was and is the continual belief of the Church; but in order to facilitate the union between the Latin and Greek Churches, this declaration was deemed inopportune, the Greeks declaring their belief in Purgatory, "but we do not argue whether it consists in fire, darkness or tempest;" and for the sake of peace the Council was content with this declaration. At all events the discussion served to establish clearly the Church's belief in Purgatory.

42. The existence of fire in Purgatory is vouched for also by numerous apparitions and private revelations. They demonstrate to our very eyes this fire as a material one, thus indicating that the words "fire" and "fiery torments" used by Scripture are to be taken in a literal sense. St. Bridget, of whom the Church, in her official prayer, says, "O God, who through Thy Divine Son didst reveal to blessed Bridget heavenly mysteries," was permitted in one of her ecstacies to witness how a soul was sentenced to a three-fold punishment: to an external and internal fire, an intense cold, and to furious assaults of the devil. Mechtildis of Magdeburg saw a lake of fire mixed with brimstone, in which the Suffering Souls had to bathe in order to be cleansed. According to St. Frances of Rome Purgatory consists of three apartments, one above the other, all alive with a clear, sparkling fire, unlike that of hell, which is dark and sombre. Bautz, whom we follow in the above, relates of the Venerable Mary Anna Lindmayer: "Her friend Mary Becher and her mother appeared to her, and left marks of fire on one of her feet, which she saw and felt for weeks. At one time she beheld Purgatory in the shape of a torrent of fiery water, at an-

other, as a prison of fire. The souls themselves appeared to her as sparks of fire falling about her. The appearance of some souls caused her to shiver with frost caused by the cold proceeding from them."

With the sole exception of their duration, the torments of Purgatory are the very same as those of hell; the only difference is that the former are temporary, the latter everlasting. This is the doctrine of St. Thomas, who says: "The same fire punishes the damned in hell and the just in Purgatory, and the least pain in Purgatory exceeds the greatest we can suffer in this world." It is true, then, that our works have to undergo purification after this life. As gold and silver are refined in the crucible, so are they cleansed of the dross of earthly imperfections in the flames of divine wrath. Oh, what an indescribable sea of fire in which the Suffering Souls are immersed! Flames encircling them, flames penetrating them, flames unceasingly tormenting them!

§ 12. Other Punishments of Purgatory.

43. Although some theologians maintain that it is uncertain whether other methods of punishment are applied in Purgatory, we yet find proofs of it in Holy Scripture, in the writings of the Fathers, and in private revelations of trustworthy and saintly persons. In the Book of Wisdom we read: "And He will sharpen His severe wrath for a spear, and the whole world shall fight with Him against the unwise." (Wisd. VI. 21.) St. Bonaventure remarks on these words: "Therefore the damned are punished not by fire alone, but the other elements also co-operate, in

order that every creature might be enkindled for the punishment of the wicked and arm itself for revenge. But if we ask what is the condition of the elements in hell, we must answer that they are not separated from one another there, nor kept in a certain order, but they are in a state of confusion and disorder." Fire being accepted by some theologians as the only means of punishment, Bautz endeavors to reconcile both opinions in the following manner: "The interior of the earth being pervaded by fire, all the elements are penetrated with it, and thus the whole creation appears armed with fire to avenge the injury done to the Creator. And because a means of punishment suited to all spirits is at hand, God, who creates no superfluities, makes use of this same means for the purification of the Suffering Souls."

44. The following examples from private revelations and apparitions had by saintly persons will explain this. Though these revelations are not dogmas of faith, it would nevertheless be temerarious to dispute or deny them; for Holy Church herself, in the acts of the saints, affirms that the latter were endowed with the gift of supernatural vision and prophecy. These miraculous revelations disclose to us not only the punishment of fire, but also other punishments in connection with it; they inform us of souls surrounded at the same time by fire, by darkness, by cold, and by evil spirits tormenting them. St. Thomas Aquinas says: "Their sufferings shall be the same as those of the damned except in their duration." The Venerable Catherine of Emmerich assures us: "There are places in Purgatory where evil spirits torment and frighten the souls. These places are the most terrible, and we would be inclined to believe them

to be hell, except for the inexpressibly touching resignation of the Suffering Souls."—Dionysius the Carthusian relates the apparition of a religious in England, who affirmed that the Souls in Purgatory are assaulted, beaten and tormented in various ways by the devils.

The Suffering Souls are not only assaulted by their enemies, but they are also afflicted in consequence of the pious and zealous aspirations they had on earth. Let us instance this by the three theological virtues. The soul was imbued with divine faith: why did it not live accordingly, thus rendering its present purification unnecessary? Why did it lose so much time in transitory things, when it hoped to gain heaven by the grace of Jesus Christ? Why did it profess to love God alone, when it divided its love between Him and the creatures? Thus all the virtues combine to confound the soul most painfully. Saul, having been captured by his enemies, said in desperation: "Draw thy sword and kill me, lest these uncircumcised come and slay me, and mock at me." (I. Kings xxxi. 4.)

45. In Purgatory, as in hell, those of our senses will have to undergo particular punishment, that served us more specially in committing sin, according to the adage: "Wherein man sins, therein is he punished." Thus St. Hedwig saw in a vision how the proud were plunged in mire and filth; the disobedient were burdened and bowed down as if by a heavy load; the intoxicated appeared as bereft of consciousnesss; the gluttons were tormented by continual hunger and thirst, the impure by fire.—The Venerable Sister Frances saw a notary handling his writing instruments; a locksmith with a red hot hammer; a drunkard with a fiery cup; a vain woman clothed in burn-

ing rags and having a loathsome face; an immodest person inexpressibly ugly, and surrounded by fire.—Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque saw a deceased Sister lying on a fiery couch in punishment for her slothfulness, her heart plucked to pieces for her murmurings, her tongue eaten up for her uncharitable remarks.—Of the Venerable Sister Mary Ann Lindmayer we read similar visions. A negligent priest appeared to her in the shape of a miserable candlestick with the stump of a candle. Those excessively fond of certain animals were sentenced to bear them about their necks. (Bautz, page 613.)

Such and similar are the punishments to which the souls are condemned in their abode of misery, in their prison of darkness.—The Venerable Bede relates an occurrence which in his time created a great sensation in England and was readily believed. A man by the name of Drycthelm died after a severe illness. After being dead for a night, he rose again to the great terror of the bystanders. Then he related his experiences in the next world as follows: "A young guide conducted my soul into an extensive valley full of horrors and darkness, so that I was filled with terror. It was divided into two apartments, one filled with fire and flames, the other with snow, ice and frost. There I beheld a countless number of Suffering Souls, hideously disfigured and fearfully tormented, and pressing forward like a stream from one apartment into the other. They precipitated themselves from the icy lake into the flames, from the cold into the fire, finding no rest. I imagined I saw the torments of hell, so great were the sufferings I witnessed. But my guide corrected me, telling me it was only Purga-

tory, and in particular the abode of such souls as had delayed their repentance till on their deathbed, for which they were sentenced to Purgatory till the day of general judgment. But the prayers of the faithful, their suffrages of alms, penance and fasting, and particularly the Holy Masses offered up for them, relieve them in their torments, abbreviate their punishment and hasten the time of their deliverance." This portrayal of the sufferings in Purgatory is far from overdrawn: it rather does not justice to the reality. Convinced of this, St. Bernard exhorts us: "Brethren, put away from you the old leaven as long as there is time. The days of probation pass away, whether we use them for our purification or not; but woe to us if they are fulfilled before our cleansing is accomplished, so that we have to be purified in that fire, than which nothing in this world can be imagined more painful, smarting and acute." The holy Fathers and theological writers in general coincide with this view.

§ 13. Consolations in Purgatory.

46. Every soul in Purgatory is a beloved child of God, and is conscious of this childhood with a higher degree of certainty than are the most saintly and godly souls in this world. This consciousness fills the Holy Souls with consolation amid the greatest torments of Purgatory. When St. Francis of Assisi had been assured in a vision that he was among the elect, he exclaimed in an ecstacy of heavenly delight: "Paradise, O Paradise! We shall enter Paradise!" So great was his rapture at this assurance, that he henceforth despised all transitory things.

Mindful of the consolation of the Holy Souls at the assurance of their future beatitude, St. Francis of Sales says, "The thought of Purgatory is productive rather of consolation than of terror. Most persons are afraid of Purgatory, because they regard themselves rather than the glory of God." And he ascribes this to those preachers who refer only to the punishments of the middle state, and do not remind their hearers also of the consolations and joys by which the sufferings of the Holy Souls are mitigated. "Great as the torments of Purgatory are," he continues, "so that they can not in any way be compared with the utmost suffering in this world, the interior consolations granted there are nevertheless so ineffable that no earthly bliss and enjoyment can equal them."

Even in this life there are occasions when joy and sorrow dwell together in the human heart. For years the lover suffers for his beloved, enduring hunger and thirst, cold and heat amid self-denials and labors, in order to prepare a home for himself and the object of his affections. The saints did the same in a still higher degree to attain the divine object of their love. How resignedly, how joyously they suffered on the rack, the cross, by fire, in torments of every description—all the while loudly praising God! Remember St. Stephen, St. Lawrence, St. Ignatius, St. Agnes, St. Felicitas, St. Apollonia and others. God is admirable in His saints, as on earth and in heaven, so also in Purgatory. Undoubtedly all the souls in Purgatory join with grateful hearts in the words of St. Chrysostom, "If I had to pass through a thousand hells, but were assured of finding paradise in the end—how

pleasant these hells would be to me!" The Holy Souls, in their sufferings, experience a greater consolation than the saints on earth do in theirs. The former are conscious of their impeccability, they are confirmed in charity, and are no longer in danger of offending God.

47. The Holy Souls are not only sure of their eternal destiny, but know also how long they have to suffer, and that every moment of delay prolongs the duration of their exclusion from paradise. Accustomed to submit to the will of God in everything, they joyfully endure their pains; yea, they hasten to betake themselves to the flames in order to accelerate their purification. The saints on earth did the same. Many of them retired voluntarily to a desert, to a convent cell, to a high pillar, to serve God in austere atonement; others delivered themselves to their executors, willingly suffering the torments of fire, of the rack and the sword to cancel the indebtedness contracted by their own sins, and to make reparation for the sins of others. The Holy Souls in Purgatory are animated by the same zeal for appeasing God's justice. Their zeal is so great, that not only do they not decline to suffer, but they would consent to their very annihilation for the greater glory of God; for God's will is their will. They praise God's justice, their suffering is voluntary and loving. Unselfish, their sole desire is to please God by love alone. They find sweet satisfaction in the exercise of charity and patience for these virtues' own sake, without reference to any other reward but that of pleasing Him whom they love, and who loves them with a divine love. This is essentially a heavenly consolation for these Holy Souls.

48. On the consolations of Purgatory St. Catherine of Genoa remarks: "There is no peace to be compared with that of the souls in Purgatory, save that of the saints in Paradise, and this peace is ever augmented by the inflowing of God into these souls, which increases in proportion as the impediments to it are removed. The rust of sin is the impediment, and this the fire consumes, so that the soul in this state is continually opening itself to divine communication. On the other hand it is true that the souls in Purgatory suffer torments which no tongue can describe nor intelligence comprehend unless assisted by a special grace of God. True, the love of God by which the soul is suffused fills it, as far as I can see, with an ineffable contentment; but this contentment does not take away from the souls in Purgatory the least particle of their torments. On the contrary, this love, feeling itself impeded, is the source of their pain, which is increased proportionately to the perfection of their love. And it seems to me that I see the punishment of these souls to consist rather in discerning in themselves something displeasing to God and in having voluntarily admitted it despite His great goodness, than in any other torment they have to suffer in Purgatory. They are so contented with the divine dispensations in their regard, and with doing all that is pleasing to God in the way in which He chooses, that they cannot think of themselves. They see nothing but the divine operation which is so manifestly bringing them to God that they can reflect neither on the pain nor on the consolations of their state. It would seem insupportable to a soul to see that due reparation was not made to God; to be freed from this rem-

nant of rust it would suffer a thousand hells rather than appear before Him without being completely cleansed. Thus knowing that Purgatory is intended for the cleansing of these stains, the soul casts itself into it, and considers the removal of the impediments a great mercy." (*Lechner, Life and Works of St. Catherine of Genoa.*)

49. The Church, in the Office of the Dead, confirms this doctrine, and describes in a touching manner the joyously sorrowful condition of the Suffering Souls. Their past, their present state, and their blissful future is placed vividly before our eyes. We are reminded of their ardent love, of their joyful praise of God; of their undisturbed peace, their sweet, unshaken hope. On the other hand we are shown their ineffable pain, profound sorrow, bitter want, their insatiable yearning and mournful plaint.

In order, however, to fully understand what was hitherto explained, and what appears to us full of mysteries, we must attentively contemplate the most sacred humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. At the consummation of His passion, when suffering the agonies of death, He not only seemed forsaken by His Heavenly Father, but so to say by His own Self, because He would not permit His divinity to console His humanity. Blissful in His divinity, Jesus was so encompassed by sorrow in His humanity, that He exclaimed in the Garden, "My soul is sorrowful unto death;" and on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me!" This is a true image of the gladsome yet sorrowful condition of the Suffering Souls in Purgatory; on the one hand they are unhappy, on the other replete with hope and heavenly consolation.

50. The torments of Purgatory ought to imbue us with a holy fear of offending God; they ought to excite us to the performance of penitential works and fill us with a continual dread of the judgments of God. Drycthelm, whose resuscitation was referred to in a preceding paragraph, thenceforth was not content to lead a truly Christian life; but intent on living a model of penitence and dying a saint, he divided his property amongst his family and the poor, and retired to a monastery, where he lived so austerely, that his rigor astonished all England. He imitated the meekness and fervor of the Holy Souls; and when asked by his religious brethren how he was able, at his advanced age, to persevere in so austere a life, he replied, "My dear brethren, the rigors that I witnessed exceeded mine by far. These practices are nothing in comparison to what I saw in Purgatory."

51. There are people who cannot bear the thought of Purgatory. They are distressed to think that after serving God all their lives, after passing victoriously through their many trials, they should proceed from the sufferings on their death-bed to remain for years in the cleansing flames of an unparalleled fire. Let them abandon their unreasonable dread. If we die in the love of God we will be reconciled to the ordinations of His will. We will rejoice at escaping hell, at being sure of our salvation, at suffering purification according to the will of God and for love of Him, without expecting increase of our merit or our reward; we will rejoice that every obstacle to the operation of grace and to the practice of virtue is removed from us, and that we are drawing nearer and nearer to God without the least danger of ever losing Him. Justified souls

rejoice at undergoing that final purification which enables them to render complete reparation to the offended majesty of God, and they regard their sufferings as a favor of divine mercy. Therefore, to feel distressed at the prospect of Purgatory indicates a want of submission to the will of God. Faber observes, that whosoever considers himself as having deserved hell, is glad and grateful to go to Purgatory.

52. Finally, there are others, such as do not wish to amend their lives, who are wont to declare that they will be satisfied to go to Purgatory after death, if only they escape hell. They speak without reflection and know not what they say. For if they continue voluntarily in their vices and sins, they will have to suffer a most intense Purgatory if they are so fortunate as to escape hell. Then there may be even pious persons inclined to make little of the punishments of Purgatory, because of the consolations granted to the Suffering Souls, albeit the pain is thereby not diminished in the least. Such depreciation of the torments of purification is offensive to God. Faber informs us, that when Blessed Henry Suso, as a consequence of his familiar intercourse with God, began to think less of the punishments of Purgatory, our Lord warned him that this was displeasing to Him. For Purgatory is a place of punishment, not of reward. Therefore many theologians declare that the least pain of Purgatory exceeds by far not only every temporal suffering, but the sum of all temporal sufferings.

§ 14. The Duration of Purgatory.

53. At the Last Judgment the condition of purification comes to an end for all souls in Purgatory. This is the belief of the Church, founded on the doctrine of that final event. "And these" (the wicked) "shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting." (Matth. xxv. 46.) Hence St. Augustine remarks: "The Christian is therefore to hold that there is no Purgatory, except before the last and tremendous judgment." Those that die shortly before the Last Judgment will have to suffer greatly by the occurrences preceding it, which God will perhaps reckon for their punishment. Moreover the holy Fathers declare that God may so increase the intensity of their punishment that they atone for their faults in a short time. It is certain, then, that the punishment of Purgatory is not everlasting, for in this case there would be no difference between it and hell. It is certain also that the duration of Purgatory will not last beyond the final judgment, for after it there will be only heaven and hell. Finally, it is beyond doubt that the torments of Purgatory will not be of the same duration, nor of the same intensity for all souls; for justice admits not of equality of punishment where there is no equality of guilt.

54. It is difficult, or rather impossible, to demonstrate how long the punishment of particular souls will last. St. Augustine teaches that the duration of punishment in Purgatory for a soul is fixed according to the measure of sin and penance of each individual. The duration may be measured by days, and yet, on account of the intensity of pain, it may seem much longer.

Brother Constantine of the Redeemer appeared after his death and said, "I suffered three days, and they seemed to me to have been three thousand years." For certain souls Purgatory, not abbreviated through the intercession of the faithful, may last until the end of time; for our Judge is just, and "it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebr. x. 31.) It is only by the special favor of the goodness and mercy of God that we are permitted to shorten the sufferings of the souls in Purgatory. When, therefore, souls suffer a long time in it, it is in great part the fault of surviving Christians, who are either careless and lukewarm in their prayers for them, or have too high an opinion of their virtues. Another reason for the long duration of the suffering of some souls is their inability to do anything for themselves, the great number of faults and negligences of which they have been guilty, and particularly their neglect and want of charity during life for the souls of the faithful departed; finally, the immaculate purity required of those that enter heaven. We append a few examples of long suffering in Purgatory, taken from the revelations of saintly persons.

According to Venerable Marina of Escobar some souls are sentenced to a punishment of twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty years and more. One soul told her that it had been sentenced for a period of almost inconceivable duration, but by the aid of suffrages the time had been shortened. The Venerable Sister Frances of the Blessed Sacrament relates: Some pious Carmelite Sisters had to suffer for twenty, forty and fifty years, and still their deliverance was delayed. A pious bishop was in Purgatory ninety-five years for some

negligences; a priest forty years for similar reasons; a nobleman sixty-five years on account of his fondness for gambling; another soul had suffered for eight years when it appeared to Frances. The Venerable Catherine Emmerich, a great friend of the Suffering Souls, mentions souls that were in Purgatory for centuries. She relates: "I was led to the various abodes of the souls, and remember being transported to a mountain whence a soul advanced towards me, wearing a chain and surrounded by a red blaze. It had been there for a long time, abandoned by everybody, remembered by and prayed for by no one. It was the soul of a man whose education had been neglected, and it seemed to me, by the fault of his mother. He had retained a kind of dread and respect for the Blessed Virgin Mary. Once, when passing an image of the Blessed Mother, he was tempted to destroy it, but refrained from doing so by some emotional impulse. After this he was attacked by a malignant fever, and desired to make his confession, but became unconscious before he could do so. Yet, he had the grace to make an act of perfect contrition before his death, and thereby was saved. He said that Holy Masses would be of particular assistance to him, and that his term of punishment would be shortened greatly by suffrages of every kind." (*Schmoeger, Revelations of Catherine Emmerich.*)

Faber, speaking of the duration of the punishment in Purgatory, says: "If Sister Frances beheld the souls of many pious Carmelite Sisters, some of whom had been favored with the gift of miracles during life, still suffering in Purgatory ten, twenty, thirty and sixty years after their death, and even then not near their deliverance, what must become of us and ours?"

55. Many Holy Souls not found sufficiently pure to enter heaven at their death, suffer long in Purgatory because we deny them the aid of our suffrages in the belief that they are high in the glory of heaven, whilst they are helpless in the torments of the middle state. We deem it an act of Christian charity to regard our deceased beloved ones as beyond the need of purification; hence the misplaced phrase, "The dead are at rest; they are better off than we," etc. This is a delusion, by which satan but too often succeeds in causing us to neglect our dead. For though the souls in Purgatory are assured of their salvation, and are no longer subject to temptation, they are yet deprived, as long as they are detained in Purgatory, of giving that glory to God which He receives by the adoration and praise of perfectly pure souls. By thus influencing persons to refrain from praying for their deceased friends, the devil evidences his hatred of God and his envy of the Holy Souls, and we, by listening to his suggestions, become instruments of his malice if we neglect, under the semblance of charity, to come to the aid of our suffering friends. In this respect St. Augustine is an example worthy of imitation. It is related of him that for twelve, yea, for thirty years after his mother's death he continued to celebrate Holy Mass himself, and caused it to be celebrated by others, for the repose of her soul, and that he urgently implored the prayers of the faithful for her.

56. The Venerable Curé d'Ars, J. B. Vianney, reckons among the forsaken souls those of bishops, priests and other pious persons who died in the fame of sanctity, or at least had better opportunities of sanctifying themselves than common Christians. Ac-

cording to the rule that much shall be required of them to whom much has been given, such souls are subjected to a severer scrutiny than the generality of Christians. Ecclesiastical writers often dwell on the fact that priests and superiors have to undergo a particularly long and painful purification in Purgatory. Moreover, it is a sad experience that no person is forgotten so easily and so soon after death, as the priest; in some instances the faithful have so high an opinion of his sublime dignity and virtue that they resent the thought of his being in Purgatory; in other instances it is a punishment of his neglect in coming to the relief of the Suffering Souls.

The Venerable Sister Frances had apparitions of two popes, who begged her prayers for the abbreviation of their long Purgatory; of a Cardinal, who suffered thirty years for some negligences; of a Spanish bishop, who had been in Purgatory seven years for seeking his own advancement in his high office, and for neglecting some of its duties; of several priests of Pampeluna, who had suffered forty and fifty years for faults of idleness, of ambition, and of neglect of duty. One priest that appeared to her had to suffer for distractions during the recitation of the divine office, for undue haste in the celebration of Mass, for ambition and for fickleness in his good resolutions.—To these examples might be added a number of others from unimpeachable sources; but we deem them sufficient to fill us with intense pity for the Suffering Souls, and to induce us to reject the practice of praising the deceased for their good qualities and actions, meanwhile forgetting that their debts have to be paid "to the last farthing," which we can and ought to do for them by

our prayers. It does great harm to them and to us to believe that they do not need our prayers. Such souls become the most forsaken and forgotten ones, and we expose ourselves to the danger of experiencing the truth of the words of Scripture: "With what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." (Matth. VII. 2.)

57. That Purgatory is of long duration, that it is extended to centuries, and, for some souls, even to the day of general judgment, can be gathered also from the works of theological writers, and from the prayers of the Church. Some of the holy Fathers explain the difficult passage in the first epistle of St. Peter, where he mentions those as saved "which had been sometime incredulous when they waited for the patience of God in the time of Noe." (I. Pet. III. 20.) Many, they say, seeing the prediction of Noe fulfilled, were undoubtedly converted, and repenting, were pardoned by God. They perished in the waters which covered the earth, and their souls were detained in the prison of which St. Peter speaks, until the Redeemer appeared amongst them after His death, and announced to them their deliverance. Thus they had to suffer in Purgatory many centuries.

The heinousness of mortal sin, the multitude of sins, though pardoned and remitted as to the guilt and eternal punishment, by their very nature demand a long duration of temporal punishment. In her ancient liturgical prayers the Church intercedes for all the departed since the creation of the world.—Another proof of the possibility of a long duration of the punishment in Purgatory is found in the fact that there are

so called perpetual foundations of Masses, of Masses to be said as long as the church in which they are founded exists. In the ages of faith this laudable pious custom was very general, and it is most commendable. For who knows but what the souls of our departed ones are among the number of those unfortunates, who, if they are not assisted by our suffrages, see the end of their sufferings only after the lapse of years, so that they, poor children of the Sacred-Heart, pine and sigh for relief in their torments? Oh, how few Christians know the true state of their conscience, the actual amount of their indebtedness to divine justice, to be paid after their departure from this world! True, our Judge is merciful, but His mercy does not abate His justice; and this is appeased only by good works in Christ Jesus, our Redeemer: by Holy Mass, prayer, alms-deeds and acts of mortification, or other works for the relief of the Holy Souls. — Christian soul, what have you done, what do you do for this purpose?

§ 15. The Location of Purgatory.

58. The general opinion of scholastic theologians, adhered to also by Bellarmine, is that Purgatory is located in the interior of the earth, very near to hell. This, also the common belief of the faithful, is confirmed by the liturgical prayers of the Church, and by the testimony of Holy Scripture.

The Church prays: "Deliver, O Lord, the souls of the faithful departed from the punishment of hell and from the deep abyss." In this passage she calls Purgatory "hell," that is, a deep subterraneous cavern next to the hell of the damned. St. Thomas teaches

explicitly, "Purgatory is connected with hell, and this in such a manner that the same fire torments the damned and purifies the just." Hell, however, according to the unanimous acceptation of theologians, is located in the interior of our earth. St. Augustine finds this quite appropriate, and in support of this theory he quotes Ecclesiasticus: "I will penetrate to all the lower parts of the earth, and will behold all that sleep, and will enlighten all that hope in the Lord." (Eccli. xxiv. 45.) St. Bridget, speaking of the severity of the punishments of Purgatory, refers to its location as follows: "The severest pains and torments are above hell, in its neighborhood, where the devils also trouble the souls." Venerable Bede also notices, in his history of England, the well-known revelation of Brother Drycthelm, by which the general opinion is confirmed, that Purgatory proper is in the interior of the earth.

59. Nevertheless we must not view Purgatory as being always one and the same local prison. In the visions of many saintly persons are mentioned various places where the Holy Souls are purified and suffer their Purgatory. Faber observes: "Some revelations relate of souls that are not confined in a local prison, but undergo their punishment in the air, or next to their graves, or near the altars of the Blessed Sacrament, or in the rooms of those praying for them, or amid the scenes of their former frivolity and vanity." According to the *St. Benedict's Stimmen*, the Venerable Sister Frances of the Blessed Sacrament had visions of Sisters who were sentenced to suffer in their former homes, in their convent cells, in choir, or in other places where they had committed faults. The Venerable Bernard Colnago, S. J. saw at Rome a soul that

expiated its faults for forty-three years in one of the streets. According to the opinion of most spiritual writers the souls suffering in various places by far outnumber those of the Church militant. Hence Our Lord said in a vision to St. Marina, "Do not be astonished, but know that in proportion to those that remain in Purgatory the number of souls you are to liberate is like a drop of water in a mighty stream." Declaring that scholastic theologians generally coincide with this view concerning the great number of souls sentenced to suffer in various places, Bautz says: "St. Thomas remarks that the opinion of the saints and numerous revelations render the acceptance of a two-fold place of purification probable. Purgatory proper is located in the depth, adjacent to hell. But by divine decree there are other places of purification, for we read that Suffering Souls were found here and there on earth. God has so disposed: first, for the conversion of the living, that they might learn from such evidence how sin is punished in after-life; secondly, for the relief of the departed, in order that the living might be reminded of the needs of these souls and hasten to come to their aid."

What a view is opened to us in this phase of future life! Such a number of souls suffering in so many places of purification! And again, the multitude in Purgatory proper, in that silent, quiet abode of sufferers, presided over by the Mother of Mercy, the Blessed Virgin Mary, where angels are the ever willing ministers of her clemency! For these souls the suffrage of our prayers is asked, that their deliverance may be hastened by the application of the expiatory merits of Jesus Christ and His saints.—Christian soul,

what part have you hitherto taken in their deliverance? Were you intent, at least to some degree, on coming to their aid by prayer, alms-deeds and Holy Masses?—"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (Matth. v. 7.)

§ 16. Credibility of Apparitions of Departed Souls.

60. Bellarmine proposes the question whether souls return from Purgatory to this world. This question is by no means irrational, as many are inclined to believe. It is remarkable that in our day there are so many, even pious and learned persons, who are in general disinclined to believe in apparitions of the dead, not even admitting that there may be exceptions; and yet such apparitions are fully corroborated by the testimony of Holy Scripture and attested by most reliable witnesses. In the Old Testament we have apparitions of Samuel, Jeremias and Onias; in the New Testament Moses and Elias appear on Mount Thabor. At Our Lord's death on the cross, "the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints that had slept, arose. And coming out of the tombs after His resurrection, came into the holy city and appeared to many." (Matth. XXVII. 52, 53.) The Venerable Catherine Emmerich, in her book of visions, says in relation to this passage, "The highpriest Zacharias, slain between the temple and the altar, appeared in the *sanctum* and spoke threatening words; he also referred to the death of that other Zacharias, whom Herod had ordered to be killed, and to that of St. John, and to the murder of the prophets in general. Two sons of the pious highpriest Simon the Just, an ancestor of Simeon who prophecied at the presentation of Jesus

in the temple, appeared in the great pulpit as spirits of enlarged form. They denounced the murder of the prophets, declared that the sacrifice was now at an end, and exhorted all to believe in the doctrine of the Crucified. At the altar Jeremias appeared issuing threats, and declaring that the sacrifice of the Old Law now gave way to that of the new dispensation. The apparitions and exhortations in places to which Caiphas alone had access were kept secret and denied, and those that dared to mention them were threatened with severe penalties. Then I saw the portals of the sanctuary open amid a great noise. A voice exclaimed, 'Let us go hence!' and the angels left the temple. The altar of incense trembled and a censer fell, the case containing the Scriptures was overturned, and the sacred books were tumbled out. The confusion increased, and the time of day was forgotten. Here and there lay dead bodies; other dead walked about among the people and spoke threats; at the sound of the voice of the angels leaving the temple they returned to their tombs. Whilst this was going on in the temple, similar consternation was visible throughout all Jerusalem. Immediately after three o'clock many graves opened, particularly in the north-western part of the city. Pilate, confused and superstitious, was greatly terrified and incapable of attending to his duties. The earthquake shook his palace, which rocked to and fro whilst he fled from one room into another. The dead appeared in the adjoining court-yard and upbraided him with his unjust sentence and contradicting judgment. Herod, in his palace, was beside himself with fear, and had all his apartments closed up."

Apparitions of angels are also frequently mentioned in Scripture. These pure spirits, though never clothed with a body, yet appeared in visible form to Abraham and partook of food with him. Angels appeared to Hagar, to Lot, to Jacob, to Balaam, to the Israelites, to Gideon, to the mother of Samson, to David, to Elias, to the servant of Eliseus, to Tobias, to Sidrach and his companions, to Judas the Machabee and his warriors; to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to St. Joseph, to the shepherds at Bethlehem, etc., etc. Verily, whosoever denies the possibility of such apparitions, professes little knowledge of the supernatural, and denies his belief in Holy Scripture, which attests that souls and spirits appeared from the other world.

61. The holy Fathers also regarded the apparitions which the martyrs and other saintly persons had as genuine. Who would have the presumption to fix a boundary in this matter, thus circumscribing the omnipotence of God by a denial of the possibility of apparitions?—St. Augustine relates that a deceased father appeared to his son, declaring invalid a debt he was said to have contracted before his death.—St. Gregory of Tours mentions that St. Vitalina appeared to St. Martin.—St. Peter Damian describes how a priest saw the soul of St. Severin, archbishop of Cologne. —Sister Frances of the Blessed Sacrament was continually visited by the Holy Souls; at all hours of the day and night they thronged about her, asking her prayers and help. Often they would appear to her surrounded by fire; at other times, black and emitting sparks; again as shadows, or in hideous forms. If she was in choir, they would wait near the door; and when she left, they followed her to her cell or wherever she went, to

inform her of their wants. If they found their benefactress asleep, they would remain standing at her bedside without disturbing her in order not to frighten her. On All Souls' day especially they appeared in great numbers. Among them were many souls long ago forgotten on earth, particularly those of poor patients who had died in hospitals, and of soldiers fallen in war. Concerning the latter she remarked, "They seemed to be a whole army." She would liken the number of souls about her with the throngs crowding a church on extraordinary occasions. Sometimes these souls brought her messages of other souls that were not permitted to visit her. Thus one of the deceased Sisters of her convent brought her a message of four other Sisters who were not allowed to leave Purgatory.

Similar instances are related of Louis of Blois, Mary of the Angels, Joanna of Jesus-Mary, Gertrude of Dominico, Bernardine of the Cross, Benedicta of Brescia, and a great number of others, particularly of Catherine Emmerich. St. Bernard, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Alphonsus Liguori, and the holy Fathers generally, accept these apparitions unhesitatingly and refer to them in their writings as to facts. The same is true of other spiritual writers, for instance Dionysius the Carthusian, Louis Blosius, Thomas a Kempis; also of the most renowned historians of the Church, such as Baronius, Surius, the Bollandists, Calmet, Stolberg, Butler, etc.; then of the great theologians, Blessed Peter Canisius, Bellarmine, Suarez and others. Finally, the Church herself, after due investigation during processes of canonization, often declared the authenticity of such apparitions and recognized them as

genuine by pontifical Briefs. The possibility, then, of such apparitions is demonstrated by an uninterrupted chain of facts running back through centuries, and supported by a mass of trustworthy and reliable, yea, ecclesiastical and divine evidence.

62. In view of this mass of facts, which might easily be increased, it is inexplicable how a faithful Catholic can entertain doubts concerning this matter. According to St. Augustine it would be great temerity to deny that the souls of the departed cannot, with God's permission, return to us; for nobody can doubt with any show of reason the testimony of these unimpeachable authorities concerning the return of Suffering Souls to this world. To the objection, that spirits have no body, and are therefore invisible, we reply: If it was and still is possible for angels to appear, why not also for souls, if God empowers them to act on the corporeal world? If it was possible to God's omnipotence to permit angels and souls from Limbo to appear to men on earth, it is certainly not unreasonable to ascribe to the same omnipotence the possibility of permitting souls to appear to men for the purpose of invoking the aid of or thanking their benefactors.

63. Concerning the manner how these apparitions and manifestations of souls from Purgatory are brought about, St. Thomas and St. Augustine incline to the opinion that in many cases there occurs a supernatural action of angels on the mind of those to whom they are granted. Moreover, it is likely that the souls, like the angels, can manifest themselves in such a manner that they produce perceptible images on a person's mind without appearing visibly to him. Of the Venerable Lindmayer we read that she often heard the

Suffering Souls calling on her for help, felt them fanning a cold wind to her face or tugging at her dress, though she did not see them. Other souls manifested themselves by groaning or rustling which was heard also by others in the house. The souls can also appear as phantoms, and are able, with the assistance of the angels, to reproduce all the actions of a real body, such as movement, sound, speech, light and warmth.

Whenever our attention is directed to the departed souls by any one of these kinds of manifestation, it is a sign of the great mercy of God towards the Suffering Souls and towards us. Such apparitions make us aware of the great distress of the Church suffering, of which Church we on earth often have not the least conception, and which yet is entirely dependent on us for help. A Holy Mass, a rosary, an alms, a mortification, some other good work, even a compassionate ejaculation or pious thought offered up confidently to the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the Suffering Souls, is powerful to create an ineffable joy in that mystic abode. At the same time the apparition of a Suffering Soul, or a visible manifestation of its distress, is a salutary admonition for the living, whereby they are reminded most impressively amid their carelessness, frivolity and tepidity of the severe judgments of God.

CHAPTER III.

On the Means of Relieving the Suffering Souls.

§ 17. On the Means of Relief in General.

64. Each member of the human body has its own duty to perform: the feet walk, the hands work, the ears hear, the eyes see. Whatever a member does, it does it not for its own sake alone, but also for the sake of the other members, thus contributing to the welfare of the whole body. Our members are united with one another in such a manner that the sensation of pleasure or pain is felt not only by the member immediately affected, but more or less by all. By this sympathy the various members are moved to co-operate with and assist one another as much as possible. The head is the most prominent part of the body; from it proceeds all life; without it the members are dead. The Catholic Church is constituted similar to the human body. The members of the Church of Jesus Christ either triumph together in heaven, militate on earth, or suffer in Purgatory. And because they are all most intimately united, they sympathize most cordially in their mutual joys and sufferings. We on earth rejoice at the blissful state of our glorified brethren and sisters in heaven; we feel afflicted at the sufferings of the souls in Purgatory; we are filled with consolation or sorrow according to the intelligence we receive concerning our living brethren. This sympathy impels us to assist one

another in all our needs and troubles. The spiritual goods of the Church are the common property of her children; they all share in them in as far as they have need and are worthy of them. The Head of this body of the faithful is Christ our Lord, as the Apostle says, "And He is the Head of the body, the Church." (Coloss. 1. 18.)

65. The communion of saints is a most consoling doctrine, for it assures us of the great prerogative of having friends at the throne of God, the saints who pray for us and obtain for us the spiritual blessings and graces of which we stand in need for time and eternity. It is most consoling for the souls in Purgatory; because, being in communion with them, we are enabled to come to their aid in their great affliction by the means at our command. As the souls in Purgatory can only suffer and expiate, but not acquire merit, the Church militant takes their place in the work of atonement, offers up suffrages to the merciful and just Judge, and implores Him to accept them in expiation of their delinquencies. The justice of God demands the payment of the debt incurred by sin, but His mercy is appeased by vicarious atonement, and is moved by the intercession of the living to act with great lenity towards the Suffering Souls. The reason of this is to be found in the communion of saints. Charity, particularly supernatural charity, unites so as to make one of many. As a consequence what is performed by one is accepted by God as the work of the other. Had those souls, during their mortal life, been more fervent in prayer, in self-denial by fasting, laboring and suffering, they would have entered heaven immediately after death; now others do in their place what they neglected, thus

giving security for them. But as he that gives security assumes the debt, the indebtedness of the Suffering Souls is cancelled by the suffrages of their friends.

66. The Church triumphant can not atone in the proper sense, for the saints in heaven no longer perform the works of expiation that are necessary for the relief and release of the Suffering Souls. Atonement, in its proper sense, is the reparation of an offence by some work of penance. By atonement the sinner not only repents of his sins, but seeks to reconcile divine justice by penitential works. The Suffering Souls were called to depart from this world before they had propitiated divine justice by atonement; and now their living friends, who alone can perform voluntary meritorious acts, can make the necessary reparation in their place by penitential works. These latter can not be performed in heaven, which is the abode of eternal bliss.

The relief and aid rendered to the Suffering Souls by the Church triumphant is in the form of prayer and intercession. The saints in heaven have recourse to the clemency and mercy of God; they ask His pardon and the remission of punishment for the Suffering Souls simply as a gift, offering in return only the merits of Jesus Christ and of the Church militant. Though many theologians assert that prayer as such, irrespective of its atoning power, has of itself the effect of obtaining of God the remission of temporal punishment, the learned Suarez and the greater number of theologians call the other opinion more probable, which teaches that God glorifies not only His mercy but also His justice, and that He therefore does not remit temporal punishment in answer to prayer

alone; for in this case the saints in heaven might, by their prayers for the Suffering Souls, release all souls from Purgatory in a short time. And do not the merits of Christ Himself constitute the entire treasure of Heaven? Does He not surpass all saints of heaven in love and mercy? But whether He bestows His merits on the Suffering Souls by His own free will, or is moved to do so by the prayers of the saints—this is a question which appears difficult to decide. For according to the arrangement instituted by Christ, the ministers of His Church on earth are appointed to draw on the treasure of the merits of Christ and His saints after certain good works have been performed by the living. According to this arrangement it can be assumed that Christ will not transfer anything from this treasury without some reciprocation on the part of the faithful on earth. The saints in heaven implore nothing that is contrary to the arrangement made by Christ. The prayers of the saints in heaven are directed to the end that God may enlighten and impel the faithful on earth to make reparation for the souls in Purgatory, and that He may accept these acts of atonement performed by the living. Prayer by itself, and atonement by expiatory works, or both happily united, constitute the suffrages for the souls in Purgatory.

67. The Church militant has this advantage over the Church triumphant, that by her prayer, atonement and suffragatory expiation she can assist the Suffering Souls in cancelling so much of their debt as is yet due. The living who desire to help the Suffering Souls can assume debt for debt, cancelling by fasting their neglect of it, by tears their want of sorrow, etc.—

so much for so much—thus giving them relief in their torments. The means, then, of helping them are as numerous as the means of obtaining grace for ourselves; for we can apply our merits by way of suffrage to the Suffering Souls.

The holy Fathers divide the means of helping the Suffering Souls into three kinds, viz. the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, prayer and works of expiation, for instance alms-deeds, fasting, pilgrimages and the like. It is an incontrovertible dogma of faith always believed in the Catholic Church, and founded on indisputable evidence, that the faithful are able to aid the souls in Purgatory. Hence St. Augustine observes: "While others weep and mourn at the death of their relatives, be thou intent on coming to the relief of the departed soul by sacrifice, prayer and alms." Prayer for the dead was regarded at all times as founded in divine revelation, as a tradition of faith. The holy Fathers sometimes represent to us how the angels gather the Most Precious Blood of our Lord into golden vessels, and pour its refreshing dew on the souls in Purgatory, who are cleansed by its purifying application, and enter the abode of eternal bliss. They describe the consolation which we are able to impart to these souls during their captivity by having recourse to the treasury of the Most Precious Blood for their release, which we do by making a diligent use of the means placed at our disposal.

§ 18. Catholic Burial.

68. Generally speaking, the first effect of a beloved person's death is weeping and lamenting by the relatives. Then follow the preparations for burial,

the ordering of mourning apparel, a pompous funeral, and visits of condolence, which latter are in most cases a mere courtesy made for the sake of appearances. The corpse is clothed in expensive robes, placed in a rich casket, covered with costly flowers and buried under a splendid monument. In truth, the whole performance is very often nothing but a pagan spectacle arranged with a view of resulting in honor and praise for the surviving relatives, while not the least is done to hasten the release of the soul from the torments of Purgatory. The Suffering Souls do not receive the least benefit or consolation from a showy funeral. On the contrary, they are grieved at witnessing how satan is served and ambition flattered thereby. At baptism, to the question: "Dost thou renounce satan?" answer was made in the name of the soul, "I do renounce him."—"And all his pomps?" —"I do renounce them." And we imagine to do honor to a soul that departed this world fortified by the holy sacraments, that was intent during life on laying aside everything ungodly and un-Christian, by bestowing more attention on the mortal remains than on the immortal soul, by following instead of renouncing satan's works and pomps, rather than seeking God and His divine pleasure! The soul protests: "I renounce all satanic pomps," and nevertheless its lifeless body is surrounded with the impious splendor of the adversary of God; silken shrouds, costly caskets, expensive floral decorations seem indispensable; the funeral cortege must be of the grandest order to render tribute not so much to the memory of the deceased as to the vanity of the surviving family. Even the house of God is trespassed on by these vain de-

monstrations, the minister of God even is expected to make himself subservient to them by lauding the virtues of the deceased in an affecting funeral address—and all this while the poor departed soul is languishing for assistance. Could the deceased speak, he would proclaim loudly from out of his coffin: "I renounced all this; how can you thus dishonor me?" Not satisfied with paying tribute to satan by the funeral cortege and appurtenances, and by a show of excessive grief and lamenting, the world also must have its share of folly: a costly monument must announce to every passer-by what a rich harvest satan reaped in the vanity displayed over the remains of the deceased.—"To what purpose is this display at funerals?" asks St. Jerome; "must vanity take the first place even amid tears and mournings?"—There can be no greater dishonor shown to the memory of a great man, than to arrange mourning celebrations that are in contrast with all his life and principles. Thus it would be an effront to Washington, the Father of our Country, were anarchists to celebrate his memory.—What greater ignominy could be heaped on the blessed memory of the saintly Pius IX., than to raise for him an anti-Christian monument?—But this is the spirit animating the actions of those that give the first place to worldly pomp at the funerals of their relatives. The deceased renounced satan, all his works and all his pomps, and they exhibit in a most unwarrantable manner all his tokens at the funeral! Worldly pomp is in its right place at the funeral of an enemy of God, but not at the burial of a follower of Christ, "whose kingdom is not of this world."

69. As severely as the holy Fathers condemn the practice of pompous funerals, as earnestly do they exhort us to aid in having burials performed according to the rites of the Church, in a manner befitting the character of the deceased; for to bury the dead is a spiritual work of mercy. The departed soul is the chief gainer at an ecclesiastical burial. The ceremonies of the Church, the bearing of the cross, the ministers in their sacred vestments, the blessings, incense, holy water, blessed candles, ringing of the bells, the consecrated burial ground—all is replete with sweet and abundant consolation for the departed soul; for all is done to its former abode, the body, now loved by it more truly than in life as the master-piece of the Creator's hand, the sacred temple of the Holy Ghost, the future companion of its glory in eternal bliss.

70. After death there is question not only of consolation for the soul, but also of abbreviation of its punishment. The Church prays, and every prayer of faith, even that of individuals, has expiatory power. Practised in the spirit of the Church, prayer hastens the expiation and atonement of the deceased. Moreover, some of the Church's means of suffrage have the character of a sacramental, for instance holy water, consecrated ground, etc. We have seen that a pompous worldly funeral is painful to the soul of the deceased. On the other hand, its joy is great at being treated by the Church as a child of God, and at obtaining mitigation of its sufferings in Purgatory by her mediation. Over the grave the cross, the plain cross, is to be raised, victoriously proclaiming to the world that here rest the mortal remains of a soldier of Christ.—We never witnessed a more consoling, a more affecting sight than

that of a Catholic cemetery on Long Island, New York, where a plain cross over every grave proclaims to the world that there a truly Christian spirit has triumphed over the enemy of God, over his pomps and works. There external splendor does not distract the visitor when he breathes the short but fervent prayer, "Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord!"—We know of congregations that have honored their deceased pastors by the erection of costly monuments—but is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass celebrated for the repose of their souls? At present, perhaps, the members of the congregation pray for their deceased pastor; but in the course of years the present generation will pass away, and he is forgotten. Had monthly or annual Masses been founded for the benefit of his soul, his memory would have lived in the congregation; it would remain united with him in a charity not bounded by the limits of mortal life.

71. Do you then wish, Christian soul, to confer a real benefit on the souls of the departed? Do you desire to demonstrate your love and kindness for them? —Pray for them!—St. Chrysostom observes: "Do you wish to honor the dead? Give alms for them! For what will weeping alone avail? What good can a pompous funeral and vain display achieve? Rather be intent with all your might to assist the departed soul by alms-deeds, prayer and Holy Masses. Let mourners weep and show their grief; let them find consolation in tears: but let them not forget to come, with still greater zeal, to the aid of the departed by the Holy Sacrifice, by prayer and alms-deeds." St. Augustine, though exhorting earnestly not to neglect the decent burial of and appropriate monuments for the dead, nevertheless

declares, "Pompous funerals and costly tombs may console the living, but do not assist the dead." He reproves too great display on such occasions and reminds Christians to act according to their profession, and not to imitate the heathens, but rather to pray for the relief of the souls in Purgatory. Touchingly describing the last moments of his sainted mother Monica, he writes: "When the day of her dissolution was at hand, she had no thought for the sumptuous covering of her body, or the embalming of it, nor had she any desire for a fine monument, nor was she solicitous about her sepulture in her own country. None of these things did she recommend to us, but only desired that we should make a remembrance of her at the altar of God, at which she had attended the sacrifice without one day's intermission, whence she knew was dispensed that Holy Victim by which was cancelled the handwriting that was against us. (Colos. II.) Let her therefore rest in peace, together with her husband whom she dutifully served in much patience, that she might gain him for the Lord. And do Thou, O Lord God, inspire Thy servants, my brethren; do Thou, O my Master, whom I serve with my voice, my heart and my writings, incite Thy children: that those who will read this may remember at Thy altar Thy handmaid Monica, and Patricius, formerly her husband. These were my parents in this transitory life. May they be remembered with pious affection, so that, what my mother asked of me as her last request, may be more plentifully performed for her through these my confessions and prayers." (*Confess. Book* IX.)

Let every Christian assist at funerals with similar dispositions. Let him enwreathe the departed with the

immortelles of good works and with a garland of the roses of prayer, more beautiful in the sight of God than any floral decorations that can be offered. If an address is to be made, let him not dictate what is to be said, but leave this to the pastor, who will avoid vain praise of the deceased, and rather remind his hearers of the duties, obligations and hopes of a Catholic, consoling them by the promise of resurrection in Christ, who is our leader and light in life, our consolation in affliction, our hope in death, in whom alone true happiness is to be found. Thus will the departed soul receive consolation and relief by the prayers of the attendants, and by the Holy Sacrifice and ceremonies of the Church.

§ 19. Prayer.

72. The two most efficient means of obtaining the grace of God for ourselves and others, and thereby gaining heaven, are the sacraments and prayer. We treat of the latter here, and reserve an explanation of the efficacy of the former for the relief of the souls in Purgatory for a later paragraph.

As a means for our salvation prayer is most important. Our good or bad life depends chiefly on our good or bad prayer; hence on it depends also whether heaven or hell shall be ours, and whether we assist others, especially the souls in Purgatory, in gaining heaven. We are bound to pray not only now and then, but every day. Exhorting us to prayer, St. Paul says, "Pray without ceasing." (I Thess. v. 17.) And St. Augustine remarks, "Who knows how to pray well, knows how to live well."

73. Prayer is the elevation of the heart to God, either to praise Him, or to thank Him, or to ask a favor of Him; hence its division into prayer of praise, thanksgiving and petition. When we raise our thoughts, our mind to God, we soar up to heaven, the habitation of God's glory, leaving behind us the sordid cares of this world. Thinking thus of God—is this prayer? No! For prayer is an elevation of the *heart* to God; but we have not elevated our heart to Him, but only our *intellect*. It is in our heart that we experience joy, sorrow, trouble, desire, etc., hence we say, our heart is cheerful, or sorrowful. Now, if we think of God, and feel our heart replete with joy at His greatness, His goodness, at His being our Father, if we feel sorry for having offended Him, if we ardently implore Him to grant us a particular grace, etc.—in a word, if in thinking of God, we employ not only our intellect, as we do when solving a problem, but elicit in our heart, mind and will affections and aspirations of love, joy, sorrow, desire, etc. because of His perfections, then we raise our heart to God, in other words, we pray. And if, whilst we thus raise our hearts to Him in holy love, joy, contrition, etc., we express these sentiments in words, or at least elicit them mentally, then we converse with God, we pray. Hence prayer is also called a conversation with God. In prayer to the saints we raise our hearts to God at least indirectly, for we converse with God through them.

Hence, when we contemplate the glorious setting of the sun in a halo of gold and fire on a beautiful summer's eve; when we listen to the joyful strains of the feathered songsters in the air; when we feast our

eyes on the abundant harvest of the fields, and gratefully remember the greatness and bounty of God, who made all this, and then say, "O God, how great, how beautiful Thou art! Oh, that I might truly love Thee!"—then we raise our hearts to God to praise Him; our prayer is one of praise. When, on beholding a poor crippled beggar, we think of the goodness of God, whose fatherly care has preserved us from misfortune, and say, "Good Father in heaven, I thank Thee for the benefits Thou hast conferred on me!"—then we say a prayer of thanksgiving. And when we are in distress, so that we know not where in the world to turn for relief and help, and then, remembering that God knows our needs and can aid us, turn to Him, and say, "My dear Father in heaven, help me in my distress!"—then our prayer was a prayer of petition. Hence, when praying we raise our hearts to God either to praise Him, to thank Him, or to ask Him for favors.

Our Divine Lord, exhorting us to prayer, makes use of language conveying a two-fold incitement, by which every Christian must feel moved and inspired to pray. He says, "Ask, and you shall receive!" (John xvi. 24.)—"Ask!" This word includes a command of the Lord, imposing on us prayer as an obligation to be fulfilled by all. And Jesus has the right to give us such a command; He prayed continually Himself, and knows the great efficacy of prayer. Therefore He calls our attention to the blessing and fruits of prayer, and joining with the command a promise as incentive, He says, "Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full." (John xvi. 24.) He commands us to ask, because He is our Savior, who wishes us to be saved;

and because He knows that only in answer to our asking—to prayer —shall we attain happiness and salvation —shall our "joy be full."

74. We have remarked before that it seems probable that God does not remit our punishment in answer to prayer alone, but that we must perform some work of satisfaction. If this be so, the same law applies to the remission of punishment which we are desirous of obtaining for others.—Contemplating victims of the plague, of leprosy, of famine, etc., our heart is filled with compassion for these unfortunates, and calls on God for relief and help. And remembering the torments of the souls in Purgatory, which by far exceed all sufferings in this world, we are impelled to raise up our eyes to heaven imploring the release of our loved ones. Both sinners and the just are informed of these torments by faith; they fall on their knees and call for mercy to God, from whom alone comes relief and redemption. But this prayer for the faithful departed, besides being trustful of God's fidelity and mercy, must be meritorious, if it is to accomplish its purpose in every case and beyond doubt. For Jesus says, "If you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it you." (John XVI. 23.) Asking in the name of Jesus is asking that His superabundant merits may be joined to our prayer, and if this is done, nothing is impossible to our prayer, for nothing is impossible to God's omnipotence. "If you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it you:" this promise of Jesus is our surety of being heard; for taken in the abstract, God is not bound to hear our prayer.

To obtain the hearing of our prayers, certain conditions must be observed on our part:

a) The person praying must be a member of the Church militant; for with death the state of merit ceases; there is no increase of merit in the next world—neither in Purgatory, nor in heaven or hell.

b) The person praying must be in the state of grace. It is only in the state of grace that we possess supernatural life; without it our works are dead in the sight of God, and inoperative for heaven.

c) Our prayer must be voluntary, proceeding from our own free will. What is done by coercion, against our will, has no merit.

d) To be meritorious, our prayer must be addressed to God from a supernatural motive, for His greater glory.

Because the saints in heaven can no longer add to their merits, but can only intercede, their prayer, as was remarked before, has the effect of moving God to hear and receive more graciously the prayers of the living. A certain effective power may also be attached to the prayer of sinners, for God not unfrequently hears them when they ask something agreeable to Him. In this case He hears the prayer solely on account of His mercy, not on account of the petitioner's merit. A sinner acting in the name of the Church, or obeying the injunctions of a person departed in the grace of God, adds an additional value to the intercessions, but these latter have a value corresponding to the merit of the person that gave the commission. The latter is the principal, the former only his agent.

75. Hence the prayer of the just in this world is one of the effective means of assisting the Suffering Souls in Purgatory. It receives its efficacy, like fast-

ing and alms-deeds, from the qualification and ministry of the person engaged therein. Prayer partakes of the state of the person praying. Fervent and submissive prayer penetrates the clouds, and moves the Heart of God to mercy. Therefore St. Augustine calls prayer the "key of heaven," which opens the closed gates of that sublime abode—especially to the souls in Purgatory.

God is well pleased with prayer for the Suffering Souls, and therefore we may rest assured that it will attain its object. If God hears our prayer when we ask for transitory things, how much the more so will He hear it when we pray for the deliverance of the Suffering Souls, whom He ardently loves and who are destined for and sure of enjoying with Him His bliss for all eternity. Hence St. Bernard touchingly remarks: "I will invoke the Lord with mournful lamentations, I will beseech Him with continual sighing. I will remember the departed in my prayers, hoping that the Lord will cast a pitying glance on them, and will change their torments into rest, their distress into ineffable glory. By such means their time of punishment can be shortened, their pains and torments mitigated." No less aptly does Thomas a Kempis observe: "Therefore let us pray for our dear ones, whom we shall follow in a short time, that hereafter they may remember us in our distress and sufferings; but let us always pray with fervent devotion and attention."

76. A most appropriate prayer for the faithful departed is the Rosary. The Blessed Virgin herself assures us through St. Dominic, that "the release of the Souls in Purgatory is one of the chief effects of

the Rosary." By this sacred prayer we continue to renew our invocation of Mary's benevolent Heart; we implore the Queen of the Holy Rosary and of all Saints to deliver the Holy Souls from Purgatory, or to vouchsafe them consolation in their torments. We do this on the assurance of our Lord Himself, who says: "Ask, and you shall receive."

Blessed Alanus relates that many Brothers and Sisters testified under oath to having had apparitions of souls from Purgatory during the prayer of the Rosary. They appeared to them wearing the sign of the cross on their foreheads, thanked them for their prayers, and asked them to persevere in it; for except Holy Mass and indulgences there is, they said, no means so powerful to release souls from Purgatory as the Rosary, and a great number of souls were delivered by it every day.—Mary is the Queen of all Saints: of those in heaven, on earth, and in Purgatory. The Holy Souls suffer without being in condition to help themselves; therefore they are befriended in a special manner by the sorrowful Heart of Mary, the refuge of all her afflicted children.

77. A short but fervent prayer is sometimes of greater benefit to the Suffering Souls than a prolonged form of devotion which is wanting in attention. St. Jerome observes: "I prefer one psalm recited with devotion to the whole psalter said with distraction." Blessed Thomas Morus closed his daily evening prayer, which he said in common with his family, with a short prayer, viz. the psalm *De profundis*, for the souls in Purgatory. This is the Psalm selected by the Church as her prayer for the faithful departed; persons that do not know or cannot read it say in its place one *Our*

Father after the *Angelus*, and say it also in the evening before retiring. A still shorter prayer of the Church is: "Eternal rest grant, O Lord, to the souls of all the faithful departed. Eternal light shine upon them; may they rest in peace. Amen." If we must content ourselves with a short prayer, let us select these, or some other indulgenced aspiration, to relieve the Suffering Souls.

A saintly bishop once dreamed he saw a boy draw a woman resplendent with light out of a deep well. Next morning he was surprised to see the same boy kneeling at a grave in the churchyard. He asked him what he was doing, and the boy replied: "I am saying an *Our Father* and the psalm *Miserere* for the soul of my poor mother." By this the holy man was convinced that this good child had released his mother from Purgatory; and concluded thence that prayer for the dead must be highly efficacious.

78. How graciously and quickly God hears our prayer for the departed is demonstrated also by the following revelations. In a vision St. Mechtildis once saw many souls ascending out of the depths of Purgatory and entering a beautiful garden next to heaven.—The Venerable Dominic of Jesus-Mary saw some souls go to heaven while prayers for the dead were said in choir.—The Venerable Lindmayer counted four hundred souls that entered heaven through her intercession between January and March, 1691.—The Venerable Catherine Emmerich, whose suffrages for the deceased were extraordinary, released a great number of souls from Purgatory by her prayers. An angel sometimes folded her hands, thus reminding her to pray for them, and when she let them sink from

fatigue, he held them up, saying: "You must continue to pray."—Would that this consideration might induce the reader to redouble his fervor in prayer for the Suffering Souls! Not an angel, but our Savior Himself appears to us, sweating blood in His agony in the Garden, and exhorting us to fold our hands in prayer, saying: "Watch ye, and pray!" When, at the crucifixion of Jesus, all the elements conspired to wreak vengeance on a sinful world, when the earth trembled, the rocks split, the graves opened, the sun was obscured — our Savior raised His eyes to heaven and showed by His example how to invoke the mercy of God for the distress of others. "And Jesus said: Father, forgive them!" (Luke XVIII. 34.) By this prayer He reconciled His Heavenly Father, saved the world from utter destruction, triumphed over death, and opened the gates of heaven. Oh, how effective, how powerful was the prayer of the dying Savior! — How happy are we, how happy the Suffering Souls, if we unite our prayers with His prayer, and with His merits, thereby to open the gates of heaven to them! United with the prayers and merits of the Crucified, remarks St. Chrysostom, our prayer is almighty, it obtains everything for which we pray, especially if the Suffering, but nevertheless Holy Souls in Purgatory are the object of our intercession. Hence St. Augustine observes that there is no occupation more wholesome and meritorious than praying for the dead.

§ 20. Official Prayer of the Church for the Suffering Souls.

79. The official prayer of the Church has an essential and particular efficacy of its own. It is more powerful to obtain graces and benefits from God than the prayer offered privately by individual persons, however pious and holy they may be. Whom will a king hear more graciously, the spouse of his beloved only son, or a stranger? The Catholic Church is the Spouse of Jesus Christ; she serves God truly and faithfully, and God dearly loves her. Therefore He graciously hears her prayer, hears it more graciously than the prayer of individuals, however pious they may be; for no private individual possesses such dignity, and is so beloved by God, as His Church. Moreover, suppose the king were inclined to refuse a petition: would he do so, except for the most surgent reasons, if his beloved only son and his whole court, his best and most trusted friends, supported it? Now the prayer of the Church is ever united with the prayer of Jesus Christ and His saints; in other words, when the Church prays, our Divine Savior prays with her, He supports her prayer, and all the saints join in it, beseeching God to hear it. Therefore, if the petitions presented by the Church are conformable to the designs of God's Providence, which is undoubtedly the case when she makes intercession for the Suffering Souls, God willingly grants what she asks for.

80. This being so, in what veneration should we not hold, with what eagerness should we not be-speak the prayer of the Church for the Suffering Souls? If we were ill, or otherwise in distress, and some saintly

man would promise to pray for us, would we not be greatly consoled? Would we not be inspired with renewed confidence in God's help? And if a holy man, whose prayer in some instances was rewarded by miracles, were to give us his blessing and say a prayer over us—how grateful and confident we would be! No obstacle would prevent us from seeking his presence and his blessing. But is the blessing and prayer of the Catholic Church not more powerful and effective than the prayer and blessing of the most saintly individual? And we are made partakers of this blessing and prayer when we employ, in a devout and trustful frame of mind, the means of grace offered to us by the Church. We must remember well that the obtaining of graces and benefits depends in a great measure on the good and devout disposition in which we employ these means. Hence when we have recourse to the prayers of the Church, let us do so in holy veneration and in the full confidence of receiving from God, for the sake of the prayers of the Church, whatever she desires for us, especially the relief and ransom of the souls in Purgatory, these holy spouses of Jesus Christ.

81. The Catholic Church is the great institution for our salvation, founded by Christ for the whole world and for all times. As such she has the sublime mission and task of continuing throughout the centuries Christ's work for the redemption of mankind, and to accomplish it by the conversion and salvation of all nations. It is the will of God that all men should receive heavenly light and life through the Church by being led by her to the knowledge of truth and to life everlasting. For this end our Lord dwells in and remains with the Church, living and operating in her

"all days unto the consummation of the world." Therefore when God graciously hears our prayer, or the prayer of the Church, He hears it not for our sake, but for the sake of Jesus Christ, who is our Mediator and Intercessor, and who has merited for us by His life, passion and death the hearing of our prayer. Except for the merits of Jesus Christ our prayer would be in vain, it would not be heard. For this very reason the Church closes all her prayers with the words, "Through Christ, our Lord," thereby proclaiming the important truth that to Jesus Christ alone we owe the hearing of our prayer and our salvation in general.

82. The maternal solicitude of the Church for the speedy release of the souls in Purgatory is demonstrated by her ancient practices. There is not a moment of the day when she does not accompany her Divine Spouse to the portals of Purgatory by interceding for these souls in Holy Mass. At the offertory of every Mass she prays: "Accept, O holy Father, Almighty and Eternal God, this unspotted host, which I, Thy unworthy servant, offer unto Thee, my living and true God, for my innumerable sins, offences and negligences. and for all here present; as also for all faithful Christians, both living and dead, that it may avail both me and them unto life everlasting. Amen." After consecration a special commemoration is made of the dead: "Be mindful, O Lord, of Thy servants N. and N., who are gone before us with the sign of faith, and rest in the sleep of peace." (Here particular mention is made of such souls as the priest intends to pray for; after which he continues): "To these, O Lord, and to all that sleep in Christ, grant, we beseech Thee, a place of refreshment, light and peace." No

Mass therefore is celebrated without a commemoration of the dead in general or in particular. The solicitude of the Church for the release of the Suffering Souls is proved also by the rubrics, which on certain days permit the celebration of the Mass of *Requiem* in black vestments. Such days are for instance the Monday of each week, and the first day of each month, when no feast occurs. The Church selects the first days because charity urges her to come to the aid of the Suffering Souls as soon as possible. To further show her solicitude for them, she ordains a special formula of the Mass for the third, seventh and thirtieth day, and for the anniversary of a death. The general anniversary of all the faithful departed is celebrated on All Soul's Day, when as far as possible all the Masses are said in black vestments. On this day the universal Church makes a strenuous effort to secure the release of the Suffering Souls.

With the Mass of Requiem is joined, at funerals or at the cenotaph, the ecclesiastical absolution. The Church returns in spirit to the death-bed of the deceased, where the judgment struck terror into his soul. She invokes God's mercy and implores Him to grant eternal rest to the departed soul and to receive it into paradise in the company of the angels. Then the coffin or cenotaph is sprinkled with holy water and incensed, the Church meanwhile reciting the Lord's Prayer and imploring God to refresh the soul with the dew of heaven and with celestial odors.

83. Besides the Holy Sacrifice and the absolution, the Church has ordained also the recitation of a special Office of the Dead. This is handed down to us from the earliest ages of Christianity, and gives evidence of

the ardent charity and devotion with which the Church implores mercy at the throne of God and intercedes for her suffering children. The phraseology expresses the sentiments of the Suffering Souls, who as it were pray with and through the person reciting it. Everything referring to the latter is omitted, and the whole is concluded by intercessions, for instance, "Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord! May they rest in peace!" etc. In the Vespers we join in the yearnings of a soul assured of salvation, but beholding its felicity as yet in the far distance; knowing itself destined for the vision of God, but separated from Him till its stains are removed; knowing for certain that, once having entered the abode of bliss, it will join all the angels and saints in the praises of God's mercy. The versicles and responses are invocations replete with consolation, declaring these souls happy despite their torments, because their salvation is assured. The canticle and antiphon express the joyous confidence that the souls departed in the faith of Christ, but still in need of purification, will soon be admitted to the beatific vision of God. Already the Church hears them in the joyous strains of the *Magnificat*, and then falling on her knees she breathes forth the *Preces*, a series of invocations, which she closes with the Lord's Prayer. Then follows the 145th psalm, to evince her confidence of being heard.—Oh, how consoling to be permitted to call upon the Lord! He shows His mercy for the Suffering Souls, and admits them to the habitations of the eternal Sion.

84. In his book on the Suffering Souls, Ackermann relates the following: A nobleman once gave a considerable sum of money to the Superior of a Car-

thusian monastery to have prayers said for his deceased father. When the assembled choir sang nothing but the words *Requiescat in pace!*—"May he rest in peace,"—he expressed his dissatisfaction at receiving so short a prayer in return for his money. The saintly Superior told the brethren to write those words on slips of paper, and putting the slips on one side of the scales, requested the nobleman to put the money on the other side. This being done, the nobleman was astonished to see the money rising high, whilst the slips of paper went down in the scales. By this miraculous occurence he was filled with confusion, and at the same time with consolation.—Mention of this occurence is also made in the Conferences of Pope Benedict XIII.

Because the clergy perform their ecclesiastical ministry in the name of the Church, it is evident that these prayers are not private ones of the priests, but the official supplication of the Church. As such they have a special intercessory value, by which their effect is attained independently of the state of the priest's conscience. Through the Sacred Heart of Jesus the Divine Spirit continually impels the Catholic Church to send up to heaven her powerful supplications for the souls in Purgatory. Contemplating the ineffable yearning of the Church for the release of the Suffering Souls, and the great efficacy of her prayer, will you not, Christian soul, follow the impulse of your heart, and do your part for their deliverance by joining assiduously in these prayers? If you would but unite with the congregation in the aspiration of the Church, "Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord!" etc.—this alone would be a great consolation for the faithful departed.

In order to enable our readers to follow and join the Church in her liturgical suffrages for the dead, we subjoin in the Appendix a faithful translation of some prayers, and only regret that it is impossible to convey in the vernacular the full import of these supplications so beautifully expressed in the official language of the Church.

Let us, then, regard with profound veneration the prayer of the Church; let us have great confidence in its efficacy and use its formulas with devotion. We shall thereby insure for ourselves the blessings of God for this life and eternal happiness in the life to come.

§ 21. The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Suffering Souls.

85. One of the most beautiful narratives of Holy Scripture is the touching story of Esther. Belonging to the banished Jewish people, this poor virgin, on account of her beauty and virtue, was called to ascend the throne, and by so doing saved her people. In her we recognize an image of that other virgin, also descended from the Jewish people, poor, but of noble lineage, and selected by God to become the mother of Him who redeemed sinful mankind. In virtue of this sublime motherhood Mary became the Queen of Heaven, the Mediatrix of mankind; and to her therefore the Church applies the words spoken by Joachim, the high-priest, to the victorious Judith, "Thou art the glory of Jerusalem; thou art the joy of Israel; thou art the honor of thy people." (Judith, xv. 10) Mary, like Esther, is the most fair amongst women, and to her are applied the words, "Thou art all fair, and there is not a spot in thee." (Cant. iv. 7.) For this reason she

found favor in the eyes of the divine King, so that He divided His reign with her, retaining for Himself omnipotence, and turning over to her the dominion of mercy. Esther, when appearing before the king, was attended by two servants, one of whom supported her, whilst the other bore her train; in like manner the Blessed Virgin Mary is served by angels and men, whose Queen she is. Finally, as Esther became her people's helper and intercessor, so Mary became ours. Hence we hasten to her in every distress, saying, "We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God !...Despise not our prayer." And whence is it that Mary is so sublimely elevated above all mankind, why do "all generations call her blessed?" The angel Gabriel in his salutation tells us the reason: "Hail, full of grace!" he said to Mary.

86. Mary was "full of grace" before her birth. Before and in *our* birth we are devoid of grace, we are in the state of original sin. Mary, however, possessed sanctifying grace in the first moment of her conception, and possessed it to such a degree that even the shadow of sin and of concupiscence was excluded from her soul.

Again, Mary ever advanced in grace; that is, she increased in merit from day to day, and therefore became more and more filled with grace. We admire the various saints for their particular virtues, for instance St. Aloysius for his purity, St. Francis of Assisi for his seraphic ardor, etc. But what is the purity of St. Aloysius compared with that of Mary, the love of St. Francis compared with hers? It is the glimmering of a star compared with the splendor of the midday sun. As the rainbow unites all the colors gleam-

ing in the individual rain-drops, thus Mary unites in herself alone all the virtues of the saints in a supreme degree. Hence she is called the Queen of martyrs, of virgins, of all saints. Oh, what an ineffable wealth of grace she must have possessed at the end of her life! According to the general acceptation she lived over sixty years, and devoted her whole life to the pursuit of virtue: how greatly she must have surpassed in it all the saints!

There is another reason why Mary was full of grace: *she brought forth the Author of all grace.* The Source of all grace, He who merited it for us by His death, *was her Son.* As He selected Mary for His mother and deigned to take human nature from her, it is obvious that he adorned her with more grace than all the angels and saints. Not for Mary's sake alone, not in order to adorn her alone with grace did Jesus become man, but for the sake of fallen humanity. All the graces we receive, we receive through Christ, but Christ we received through Mary. She is the heavenly aurora which brought to us the Divine Sun, Jesus Christ. Hence it is the will of our Savior, that Mary should be our mediatrix. She was, as it were, the bridge over which Jesus passed in coming to us; hence she is also the bridge over which we come to Jesus in heaven. As she has brought us Christ, thus she is also by her intercession to bring His grace to our immortal soul. There is therefore no need for Mary in heaven first to merit deliverance for the souls in Purgatory; she received this grace whilst on earth, together with her dignity of Mother of God. She is, in truth, the bridge by which the suffering yet happy spouses of her Divine Son cross from Purgatory to heaven.

87. The clients of this Mother most element are indeed to be called happy, for she is their consolation and help not only in this world, but also in Purgatory. Besides promising that she would preserve from hell those who devoutly wear her holy habit, the scapular of Mount Carmel, she added a second privilege, namely that of speedy release from Purgatory. This latter promise was made about seventy years after the introduction of the scapular. Mary deigned to appear to Pope John XII. and recommended to his care the Order of Carmelites. Extending her maternal solitude even to the next world, she promised to assist the souls of the members in Purgatory, to console them and to release them as soon as possible, particularly on the Saturday following their decease. The pope published this privilege in a Bull dated March 3, 1322. (Beringer, *Indulgences*, page 711.) The meaning of this promise is that Mary gives those who wear the holy scapular and fulfil the conditions prescribed, as much assurance of their eternal salvation as can be obtained during mortal life, at the same time declaring that if they are constant in her service and lead a Christian life, they shall also receive the grace of final perseverance. Simon Stock, the General of the Carmelites, when giving this holy habit to his brethren, addressed them as follows: "Preserve deeply impressed on your minds the memory of this bounty, and be intent on receiving strength in your vocation by the exercise of good works. Never relax in doing good, watch and pray without ceasing, that the promises of Heaven may be fulfilled, and may show themselves in their full splendor for the praise of the Most Holy Trinity, and for the honor of the Most Blessed

Virgin Mary."—The mere wearing of the scapular, then, does not make us partakers of the second privilege. The Blessed Virgin, appearing to the Venerable Dominic of Jesus-Mary, addressed him thus: "My son, though many wear my scapular, yet there are few that perform what is necessary to acquire the Sabbatine privilege."—It was affirmed also by other supernatural revelations, that they who wear the scapular are released from Purgatory on the first Saturday after their death only on condition that they have fulfilled all the duties imposed thereby.—A deceased Sister appeared to the Venerable Frances of the Blessed Sacrament and said, "There are few who receive the benefit of this privilege, because there are few who observe its conditions."

88. Mary is solicitous for the Suffering Souls in Purgatory because she is the Mother of pure souls. St. Bernardine remarks, "In this prison of the spouses of Christ she exercises, so to say, absolute sovereignty in mitigating their pains, and in delivering them from their sad imprisonment." Mary demonstrated her charitable and tender heart even in this life. "And Mary rising up in those days, went unto the hill country with haste," when she heard that Elizabeth in her age had been blessed with a son. She did this to express her affection and to offer her services. At the wedding-feast in Cana her tender heart caused her to anticipate the embarrassment of the host. Now the distress of the souls in Purgatory is incomparably greater than that of either Elizabeth or of the married couple at Cana. Their torments are so great that all the sufferings of the sick, all the pains and torments of the martyrs since the beginning of the world added

together do not in the least compare with those of Purgatory, because the former are but trials, whilst the latter are punishments. The pains of the Poor Souls are similar to those inflicted by the surgeon or executioner.

Hence Mary descends with truly maternal charity into Purgatory and eases its torments. St. Bonaventure applies to her the words, "I have penetrated into the bottom of the deep" (Eccli. xxiv. 8.), and adds, in our Blessed Mother's name, "into the abyss of Purgatory, there to mitigate the pains of the Suffering Souls." St. Vincent Ferrer exclaims, "O how amiable and benevolent Mary shows herself to them that suffer in Purgatory; for through her they continually receive comfort and consolation." By her mediation the poor captives are released from their fiery prison. St. Bernardine remarks, "To Mary was given the power, by her intercession and merits, to release the souls from Purgatory, particularly those that were foremost in their devotion to her."—St. Bridget one night was addressed by the Blessed Virgin as follows: "I am the Mother also of the souls in Purgatory. Their torments are continually eased in some manner through my intercession. For it pleases the Lord to remit in this manner some of the punishments which are their due by justice."

89. St. Thomas and nearly all the holy Fathers teach that the Blessed Virgin Mary comes to the aid of the Suffering Souls. The Church also, in the Masses of *Requiem*, prays that God may grant eternal bliss to the deceased through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin and all the saints. In the same manner she prays towards the end of the Litany of all saints.

Why should our heavenly Mother feel less affection for her captive children than an earthly mother does for her offspring? Can we imagine that she will refuse her efficient consent for their deliverance from the fiery prison, when we remember that she gave her consent for the redemption of the world?

When Robert of Flanders was held captive by Stephen de Blois, the prisoner's mother was filled with sorrow at the thought of the gloomy abode of her son; and yearning to see him, she continually exclaimed, "Once more let me see my son! I must visit, I must see and console him." And her prayer was granted.— Can we imagine that Jesus would refuse His Mother's prayer? She is *His* Mother, and also the Mother of the Suffering Souls; and therefore it gives Him the sweetest pleasure to release them, or at least to mitigate the torments of those for whom she pleads. And she never ceases her intercession, for, says St. Liguori, "the less the souls are able to help themselves, the more she increases her benevolence and solicitude for them."

Therefore the Queen of Heaven rejoices at being invoked for intercession in behalf of the Suffering Souls; and the more assiduously we pray to her for this purpose, the more efficiently will she co operate with us for their relief. The Venerable Boudon therefore teaches that we should not be content with invoking her intercession for the Suffering Souls, but that we should trustfully place all our good works and prayers at her disposal for their benefit. "For", he remarks, "no one can dispose of them more equitably, and moreover, we cannot give a stronger evidence of love for and confidence in her."

§ 22. The Saints and the Suffering Souls.

90. Mortal eye has never witnessed an apparition similar to that vouchsafed the apostle St. John, and which he describes as follows: "And I saw, and beheld in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the ancients, a Lamb standing as it were slain, having seven horns and seven eyes: which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat on the throne. And when He had opened the book, the four living creatures, and the four and twenty ancients fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints: and they sang a new canticle, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: because Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God in Thy blood, out of every tongue, and people, and nation." (Apoc. VI. 6–9.) This is the sacred spectacle to which holy Church directs our eyes in order to excite us to holy desires of emulating the example of the saints, and thereby to imitate their charity towards the Suffering Souls; for it is clearly demonstrated by their lives that there is no saint in heaven who neglected to come to the aid of the souls in Purgatory. The saints did all in their power to atone for the faults of the faithful departed. They repaired their own derelictions of duty, satisfied their obligations, loved their enemies, forgave injuries, were patient in trials, sought voluntary suffering, gave alms, were intent on gaining in-

dulgences, offered up their own merits—all for the souls in Purgatory. With these meritorious works they joined retirement from the world and its pleasures, made pious foundations, prayed unceasingly, received holy communion; and above all, they were solicitous to have the Holy Sacrifice of Mass offered up, or to assist at it for the repose of the Suffering Souls. Thus the saints were continuously intent on offering suffrages for the faithful departed. In their prayers and good works they remembered, first of all, those whose state of grace at the time of their death remained doubtful, the greatest sinner, as long as he lives on earth, being subject to God's mercy; as also those who died in the fame of sanctity, the smallest faults being unable to escape the avenging justice of God. They trustfully interceded, knowing that their good works would be received by the merciful God, who revealed to St. Gertrude that it is not in opposition to His justice to release the Suffering Souls immediately from all torments, if He was asked in confidence to do so. For in this manner He intends to glorify at the same time His mercy and His justice.

91. The Suffering Souls are loved by the saints in heaven just as they were loved by them during their earthly pilgrimage, and even more so, because in heaven the saints know better their present misery and the ineffable glory for which they are destined; hence it is their most ardent desire to see them released as soon as possible. This love and desire impels them to pray assiduously for their eternal rest. We know this from the unanimous testimony of the theologians. St. Augustine and St. Thomas remark, "It is a recognized truth that the saints in heaven are very powerful

to procure the release of the souls in Purgatory by their intercession." Holy Church herself announces to us that it is profitable and well to invoke the saints for the relief of the souls in Purgatory, as she invokes them and the angels in Holy Mass and in her liturgical prayers to assist them by their intercession. We may further instance this truth by what is related of St. Francis of Assisi: The saint once appeared to one of his brethren and announced to him a privilege which had been granted to him by Christ. "I grant thee," the Lord had said to St. Francis, "that every year, on the anniversary of thy death, thou shalt be permitted to release all the souls belonging to thy Third Order, as also the souls of all thy devout clients detained in Purgatory, and in virtue of the stigmata with which I honored thee, to conduct them to paradise." From this we also see that God Himself gives testimony in favor of the invocation of the saints, and that it is in accord with His will that we should invoke them for the release of the Suffering Souls.

92. However, from this power of the saints in heaven in favor of the Suffering Souls it does not follow that God remits punishment in consequence of their intercession alone. On the part of the person wishing to aid the souls in Purgatory it is necessary for him to perform works of atonement in order to make his help effective. But in heaven merit is no longer acquired. The more probable opinion of theologians favors the view that the souls in Purgatory are under penalty of severe divine justice; for otherwise the intercession of the saints might obtain their release in a short time, and that of the Blessed Virgin in a moment. Hence the intercession of the saints in be-

half of the Suffering Souls is directed to the following objects: They pray—

a) that God may graciously receive the works of atonement and the intercession of the faithful on earth for the souls in Purgatory; and this prayer is a most appropriate one for the reason that the acceptance of the suffrages does not antagonize the demand of strict justice;

b) that God may by His grace inspire the faithful members of the Church militant, in order that they may more assiduously intercede for the Holy Souls;

c) that He may reduce the time of their punishment by augmenting its intensity; this is a great favor, since one day in paradise before the time originally set is an immense gain;

d) that God may accept their own supererogatory atonement in suffrage for the souls in Purgatory.

The latter point is considered doubtful by many theologians, because the atoning merits of Christ and the saints accrue to the treasury of the Church. It is moreover doubtful whether the saints pray to Christ to apply His merits, in virtue of their intercession, to the Suffering Souls. For according to the order established by Christ, it is left to the ministers of the Church on earth to draw from the treasury of the merits of Christ and the saints, after the faithful have performed certain good works. As a rule, therefore, Christ Himself will not draw on this treasury, at least He will not do so without some corresponding reciprocation; and the Blessed Virgin and the saints in heaven do not pray for anything that is contrary to the order fixed by Christ. Whether it be done in exceptional cases is beyond our cognition. Thus argues the learned Suarez.

How wisely God's Providence has ordered all things in order to draw us to Him! He precludes the possibility of our yielding to sloth, since we cannot rely solely on the mercy of Christ and the saints in our suffrages for the Suffering Souls. The elect are to incite us to fulfil the will of God. We pray and labor here below, and leave our good works in the hands of the saints in heaven, that they may offer them to the Almighty and invoke Him to receive them mercifully for His poor captive spouses in Purgatory.

93. This doctrine of the theologians is corroborated by the Venerable Catherine Emmerich. She says, "The Suffering Souls receive no direct aid from heaven; they obtain everything from the faithful living in this world." In Faber's works we find an observation, the sense of which is as follows: "Some authors have maintained that our Lord does not desire to help the Suffering Souls without our co-operation, and that the Blessed Virgin cannot aid them except indirectly, because she is no longer able to perform works of atonement." St. Bridget makes a similar remark. Once she saw the Suffering Souls undergoing purification in Purgatory similar to gold being purified in a crucible, and heard an angel saying, "Blessed be the mortal that hastens to the relief of the Suffering Souls. The justice of God demands that they either be purified in the flames of Purgatory, or that they be released therefrom by the good words of their friends." Then she heard a chorus of mournful voices, "O Lord Jesus Christ, just Judge, we implore Thee for the sake of Thy infinite mercy to turn away Thine eyes from our innumerable sins, and to regard the merits of Thy passion and death. Imbue with Thy true love the

religious, the priests and the faithful, so that they may hasten to our relief by their prayers, sacrifices, almsdeeds and indulgences. They can aid us if they wish; they can hasten our union with Thee, O God!"— When St. Gertrude on a certain occasion was praying most ardently for the relief of the Suffering Souls, she was assured by Christ Himself, "It would not be in opposition to my justice to release them immediately, if you would confidently pray for this purpose."

94. By this consideration we should be impelled and incited to move God with greater zeal and by works of penance to be merciful to the Suffering Souls. Let us place our prayers and works into the Sacred Heart of Jesus, into His holy wounds, before His divine Countenance, imploring Him to present our supplications to His Heavenly Father. The Immaculate Heart of Mary, full of grace, is always ready to receive our supplications, ever inciting us to be merciful to the poor Sufferers. The saints, particularly the holy patrons of the Suffering Souls, are solicitous for them, and pray to God to move charitable hearts on earth to bring them relief. Let us be intent on laying up spiritual treasures; let us confide them to the saints in heaven for the purpose of offering them to God's justice, that we may thereby honor those whom God desires us to honor. That God may spread more and more this work of mercy, let us pray with St. Augustine when he supplicates heaven for his deceased parents: "Do Thou, O my God, inspire Thy children, my brethren; do Thou, O my Lord, inspire Thy servants, in order that all those who will read this may remember at Thy altar Thy handmaid Monica, with Patricius, her husband."

Let us draw from this the wholesome lesson conveyed in the following words of St. Basil: "Let us not take a limited view of God. He who permits the sun to shine in splendor, punishes also with blindness; He who lets the rain-drops descend, permits also rain of fire. The former is bounty, the latter rigor; by the one He draws us to His love, by the other He inspires us with fear; so that it may not be said to us: Dost thou despise the wealth of His bounty, patience and mercy? Dost thou not know that the bounty of God leads to penance?"

The final act of charity performed by the saints for the souls in Purgatory consists in conducting them into heaven at the end of their purification. The Venerable Frances of the Blessed Sacrament saw the soul of Pope Gregory XV., after a brief Purgatory, ascend to heaven surrounded by angels and saints. Most conspicuous among the latter were the five saints canonized by him, viz. St. Theresa, St. John of the Cross, St. Isidore, St. Ignatius and St. Francis Xavier.—If we invoke the saints now, we will merit thereby to receive the aid of their intercession; if we neglect now to esteem their help, they will deny it to us when we are most in need of it.

§ 23. The Angels and the Suffering Souls.

95. From the time of our birth, when we become wayfarers on the road that leads to our heavenly home, we are favored like young Tobias with a companion and guide. "Then Tobias going forth found a beautiful young man, standing girded, and as it were, ready to walk." (Tob. v. 5.) As soon as we begin our pil-

grimage, behold the angel is there, though invisible to us, ready to guide and protect us. What the Lord promised to the people of Israel is done also for us: "Behold, I will send my angel, who shall go before thee, and keep thee in thy journey, and bring thee into the place I have prepared." (Exod. XXIII. 20.) Such is the service rendered us by our guardian angel on our way to heaven. He goes before us showing us the way; he protects us from dangers, and finally conducts us to the place prepared for us in heaven.

96. His power, by which he has an almost unlimited control of the visible world, corresponds with his sublimity and perfection. It is easier for our angel to move and destroy this whole terrestrial sphere, than it is for us to give motion to a small globe. We know from the Old Testament that an angel in one night destroyed one hundred and eighty-five thousand warriors of the Assyrian army, and it cost him less effort to do that than it would cost us to crush a worm beneath our foot. Besides, the velocity of these pure spirits is so great that an angel can pass from one place to another in less time than is required for the human eye or thought to reach the object to which it is directed. For the angels are God's ministers, employed by Him to accomplish the eternal designs of His Providence; and Holy Writ is full of examples showing us that God sent His angels to protect His servants. Thus an angel led Lot forth from Sodom; an angel conducted Hagar in the desert and preserved her son Ismael from death; an angel brought food to Daniel in the lion's den, and saved the three youths in the blazing furnace; an angel fought at the side of the Machabees and put to flight their enemy. In the

New Testament we read that an angel gave warning to the Three Wise Men from the East to return to their country by another way; an angel appeared to Joseph commanding him to take the Divine Child and His Mother to Egypt; an angel loosed the bonds of the prince of the apostles and conducted him safely out of prison. Such is the power with which God has invested the guardian spirits of those that hear their warning, as He Himself commands, "Take notice of him, and hear his voice, and do not think him one to be contemned." (Exod. XXIII. 21.) They cherish a great love for us; they are intent on our welfare, assist us in distress, and relieve our necessities.

97. Sin, and sin alone, is capable of rousing against us the anger of our angel. It is in his power both to punish us for sin, as also to reward us for our good deeds. "And woe to us," says St. Bernard, "woe to us, if we should provoke the anger of the angels to such a degree as to cause them to deem us unworthy their further presence and ministrations, so that we are compelled to weep and moan with the royal prophet: 'My friends and my neighbors have drawn near and stood against me: and they that were near me stood afar off, and they that sought me used violence.'" (Ps. XXXVII. 12.) A punishment like this should make us fear and tremble.

In Holy Scripture we find many examples of angels visiting sinners with the punishments they had incurred. An angel killed seventy thousand by the plague during the time of David. An angel killed one hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of Sennacherib. An angel punished Heliodorus for his sacrilege by covering him with sores. Angels pour

the vials of God's wrath over a sinful world. Finally, the Gospel assures us that the angels will go forth at the end of the world to separate the just from the wicked, and to cast the latter into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. How dreadful, if the very angels, to whose care we are now committed, should be the ones commissioned to execute this terrible sentence on us! Is this not a reason to fear their power? Should this thought not move us to fulfil with the utmost fidelity our duties towards our angels?

98. If we but listen to and follow their inspirations, our angels will be a most potent help for us in the hour of death. They will strengthen us against temptations; they will comfort us in our agony; they will conduct our souls to judgment; they will console them in Purgatory. They are not content with performing in our behalf all the services imposed on them by God, but desiring most ardently to see us truly happy, they are intent on obtaining for us from God all the graces and favors conducive to our eternal welfare. The guardian angels therefore pray for their clients at the throne of God; according to St. John's vision in the Apocalypse, they bear their tears and sighs into the Divine Presence; they unite their own supplications with those of their wards to move God more effectually to mercy. They exclaim, according to the prophet, "How long wilt Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem" (Zach. 1. 12.) and on this troubled soul? Now, God willingly hears the prayers of His servants and friends, and grants great favors to those for whom the angels pray thus assidiously. The angels, we may therefore be certain, are continually in attendance on

the suffering souls of their clients in Purgatory; it is their most ardent desire to alleviate their torments. From Purgatory they come to this world to gather diligently the good works performed for the Suffering Souls; they inspire the faithful to pray for them, to labor for them. Ascending to heaven with their harvest of suffrages, they descend thence into Purgatory to fill the Suffering Souls with consolation by announcing to them the abbreviation of their torments.—Of the patriarch Jacob we read that he saw in his sleep a ladder reaching from the earth to heaven, on which angels ascended and descended. They ascend to present to the Almighty their petitions in favor of the Suffering Souls, and they descend to bring to the souls in Purgatory the favors which they obtained for them from God through the good works of the faithful on earth.

Boudon maintains that the angels inform the Suffering Souls of the happenings in this world about which these Souls are concerned; that they reveal to them who are their benefactors, exhorting them to pray for their benevolent friends, in doing which these good spirits gladly lend their assistance. St. Augustine says, "The departed may be informed by the angels of things happening in this world, in so far as this is permitted by Him to whose judgment everything is subject."

However, it may also happen that certain Suffering Souls are deprived of the aid of their guardian angels, of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints, because they were not devoted to them during their life on earth, or neglected to aid the Suffering Souls. Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque saw souls in Purgatory who

were sentenced to forego the assistance of Mary and the saints, because during life they had lived in discord with their superiors.

§ 24. Confraternities for the Relief of the Suffering Souls.

99. In the middle of the eighteenth century, the Danube, being blocked with ice, flooded a great part of Vienna, thereby causing great damage to valuable property and threatening the lives of many of the inhabitants. The force of the angry waters had already carried off barns, undermined houses, and threatened the lives of all the inhabitants of the suburbs Leopoldstadt and Rossau. The lamentations and cries for help beggared description. Multitudes witnessed the heart-rending scene, but no one dared to come to the aid of the unfortunates, the danger was so great. The news of the distress was brought to the imperial palace and to the ears of the emperor Francis. Scarcely had he been advised of it, when he hastened to the scene of disaster, and jumping into a boat, called out, "Who has the courage to save lives with me?" The emperor's word and example inspired all present, and soon boats and skiffs were manned with rescuers. All in danger were saved, not a life was lost. This was assuredly a royal deed of the Austrian emperor, and a heroic deed of those who joined him, worthy of being recorded on the pages of history and of being held up as an example to coming generations. But what spiritual lesson does this deed convey to us? First, that we ought not to shun danger, however great, when there is question of saving life; sec-

ondly, that we should not stand by unaffectedly when there is question of saving from the lake of fire the souls of our brethren. Therefore, let us demonstrate our fraternal charity by joining a confraternity for the relief of the Suffering Souls.

100. Terrified at the thought that, as Bellarmine expresses it, "but few just men will escape the exceedingly great pains of Purgatory, because only a very small number are admitted to heaven through the supreme mercy of God immediately after their death," compassionate souls resolved to come to the aid of their deceased brethren by the extraordinary power of united prayer and other works of suffrage. The joint intercession, the increased devotion, the multiplied grace, the virtues and merits of brethren united in God, in a word, the charitable union for the relief of the Suffering Souls is a powerful means of moving the Heart of a God so full of compassion for His children in distress. As it is a holy and wholesome ministration of Christian charity to pray for souls departed in the faith of Christ and in His divine grace—souls that are, nevertheless, still subject to temporal punishment and unable to acquire merit for themselves—, therefore numbers of Catholics have formed unions for the purpose of coming to the aid of their deceased brethren. By continual suffrage and sacrifice these zealous Christians, thus united, endeavored to release from the fiery prison of Purgatory as many souls as they could in the shortest time possible.

Hence they resolved, without binding themselves under pain of sin, to offer up for this end the Seven Offerings of the Most Precious Blood, or seven times the *Glory be to the Father*, etc., or to say the rosary,

or some other prayer of their choice, with the addition, "Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord! May eternal light shine upon them, and may they rest in peace. Amen."—If they are able they give every month a small pecuniary contribution as stipends for Holy Masses to be said for the Suffering Souls, or to be applied for the expenses incurred in the propagation of the Confraternity for the relief of the Suffering Souls. The members also give each other mutual encouragement in the performance of other good works for the relief of the Suffering Souls, for instance by assisting poor boys who have a vocation for the priesthood, by contributing to the conversion of the heathens, to the support of the poor and sick; they often visit the Blessed Sacrament, propagate devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, assist poor churches, etc. They incite one another especially to assist often at Mass, and to receive holy communion frequently. This latter is prescribed by the rules of the Confraternity, and one member is encouraged to it by the good example of the other. They are further encouraged by occasional meetings and special sermons, and by indulgences granted both for membership in the confraternity, as also for the performance of good works and the reception of the sacraments as members thereof.

101. This Pious Union for the aid and relief of the Suffering Souls is founded on the faith in Christ, without which faith there can be no true spiritual fraternity of mankind. True, all men became brethren through their creation by the same God, but they did not remain what they were, namely obedient children of God. As a result great misery visited man-

kind—hatred interiorly and war exteriorly. Then Christ came into the world. "He came into His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made sons of God." (John I. 11, 12.) Once children of God, they are also brethren. Hence Christian fraternity is founded on faith in Christ. With St. Peter the early Christians exclaimed: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God," and thus became united with one another. "And all they that believed were together, and had all things in common. Their possessions and goods they sold, and divided them to all, according as everyone had need." (Acts II. 44, 45.) They persevered together in prayer. This same faith must animate us, the faith namely which shows us God as the common Father of all men, and all men as our brethren in Jesus Christ. This faith directs our attention also to our departed brethren in Purgatory. It speaks to our hearts, thus: "Behold these souls in Purgatory, so severely tried and entirely helpless: they are your brethren!" This faith, living and operating in the souls of those who profess it, will naturally hold them together in the bond of a truly Christian fraternity.

102. The charity of Christ unites the various members of the Church. God Himself inscribed indelibly into the hearts of men the command, "Thou shalt love God above all things, and thy neighbor as thyself." But as soon as man turned his eyes towards the forbidden tree in paradise, satan obscured this divine command and replaced it by self-love. Inordinate self-love caused all the misery that followed the fall of man; selfishness was the source of all his tears,

of all the streams of blood unjustly shed. Fraternal charity had vanished from the world. Then Jesus came to re-unite and strengthen the disrupted bond of charity, as He Himself declares in His farewell prayer, "Holy Father, keep them in my name, whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we also are." (John XVIII. 11.) This union He achieved by His divine love for us which He manifested by His death on the cross. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John XV. 13) Who can view this love sacrificing itself on the cross and close his heart to charity? Forsooth, only a heart of stone could do so! Where charity is enkindled in a heart, and especially where charity for our suffering brethren in Purgatory dwells, there is the true spirit of fraternity; and the more sublime and ennobled this charity is, the stronger is its bond, the more meritorious its ministry in behalf of the souls in Purgatory.

103. The Confraternity, moreover, must be enlivened with the spirit of Christ. Without spirit there is no life. When man opened his eye, ear and heart to satan, the image of God in his soul was disfigured and concupiscence was enkindled. St. Paul portrays the miserable condition of man, saying, "All have turned out of the way, they are become unprofitable together, there is none that doeth good, there is not so much as one. Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they have dealt deceitfully; the venom of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known: there is no

fear of God before their eyes." (Rom. III. 12—18.) Horrible thought, that man could thus debase himself! Christ by His death triumphed over sin, and diffused His Spirit into all that converted themselves to Him, according to His promise by the prophet, "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; moreover upon my servants and handmaids in those days I will pour forth my spirit." (Joel II. 28, 29.) And this Holy Spirit brought forth abundant fruits, such as "charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity." (Gal. V. 22, 23.) Jesus lived and died for the welfare of mankind; this same Spirit was transmitted also to His disciples, who excluded no one from their charity. They even sacrificed their temporal possessions for the welfare of the living and the dead. We read of the first Christians, "And the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul: neither did anyone say that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but all things were common unto them..... Neither was there anyone needy among them." (Acts IV. 32—34.) On this principle of charity are founded the confraternities for the relief of the Suffering Souls. All their prayers and good works are directed to this end.

104. As long as this one faith, this one charity, this uniting spirit of Christ animated all Christians and filled them with the courage to lead a holy life, there is no mention made in history of special confraternities in the Church. But when error and unbelief became rampant in the world, when a worldly life gained entrance into the Church, when immoral-

ity wrought sad havoc in the Christian community, then it was that pious Christians formed themselves into a confraternity for the purpose of resisting with all their might the impending evil which endangered so many of their brethren; in a word, they combined for the purpose of combating the evil of sin, so that a pagan governor testifies of the early Christians: "The Christians often come together in their dwellings, and before they separate they solemnly promise each other to abstain from murder, theft, intemperance," etc.

Confraternities for the relief of the Suffering Souls are moreover a help against transgressing that spirit of Christian moderation which the Church inculcates. They keep before our eyes the torments of Purgatory; they direct our attention to the needs of the Suffering Souls, and dissuade us from worldly display at funerals, insisting that we should remember the souls of the departed in prayer and by good works rather than to do homage to the world and to satan by sinful extravagance at burials.

105. We are able to trace such a union or confraternity for the relief of the Suffering Souls as far back as the year 700 of the Christian era, namely in Mabillon's "Acts of the Saints of the Order of St. Benedict." In the lives of other saints also we often meet with leagues of prayer which holy persons entered into for the purpose of helping one another in mitigating the torments of Purgatory. We find instances of this in the biographies of St. Boniface, the Venerable Bede, Abbot Eudberct of Wiremouth, and others. St. Boniface wrote to Optatus, Abbot of Monte Cassino: "We ardently implore that a bond of brotherly love unite us, so that the living offer prayer for each other, and

join in prayer and in offering the Holy Sacrifice of Mass for the deceased, whose names shall be exchanged between us for this purpose."

In the *St. Benedict's Stimmen* of 1880 we are informed that as early as 1005 bishops, priests and clerics formed a league, the former binding themselves to celebrate a certain number of Masses after the death of a member, the latter to recite the psalter repeatedly. Emperors and kings, bishops and other persons of rank promised to give food to a certain number of poor, or to give a specified alms, and to have lamps and tapers lighted in suffrage for the dead. In our times also we find these confraternities throughout the Church, in villages and cities, for priests, religious aud laymen. We now proceed to mention some of them for practical purposes, particularly such as deserve special recommendation on account of their extensive membership and their extraordinary privileges for the living and the dead.

106. The Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood was founded at the beginning of the nineteenth century by the Rev. Francis Albertini, who at a later period became bishop of Terracina, Italy, and died in the fame of sanctity in the year 1819. The members of this archconfraternity offer up to our Heavenly Father the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their own sins, for the needs of Holy Church, for the conversion of sinners, and for the relief of the souls in Purgatory. Pope Pius VII., in 1815, raised this pious union to the rank of an archconfraternity and endowed it with numerous indulgences. These latter were added to considerably in 1850 and 1852 by Pope Pius IX., and were confirmed

anew in 1878 by the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences. A great admirer and propagator of this now widespread devotion and confraternity was the founder of the Congregation of the Most Precious Blood, the venerable Servant of God, Caspar del Buffalo.—The altars of the archconfraternity are privileged *ipse facto* and forever. The members have a special share in all the good works and penitential exercises of all religious Orders and Congregations in the world. (Rescript of 1852.) All the indulgences are applicable by way of suffrage to the souls in Purgatory.

The Confraternity for the relief of the Suffering Souls, whose headquarters are in the Redemptorist church of St. Mary in Monterone at Rome, was raised to the rank of an Archconfraternity by Pope Gregory XVI. It is also endowed with many indulgences and privileges. It was founded in the church named in 1841, for the purpose of continually aiding the Suffering Souls by good works and sacrifices.

Other well known confraternities for the benefit of the Suffering Souls are the following: The Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Intercession, at Rome; the Pious Union of Masses, at Ingolstadt, Bavaria; the Confraternity of the Perpetual Adoration, at Lambach, Upper Austria; the League of Helpers of the Holy Souls, in France, of which every Catholic can become at least an honorary member; St. Benedict's Society of Priests for the relief of the Suffering Souls, at Lambach; the Society of Priests and Association of Perpetual Masses, under the patranoge of St. Joseph, for deceased priests, etc., etc.

107. But Christian piety was not satisfied with uniting the faithful in unions and societies for the

purpose of attaining more speedily the various pious objects aimed at. The devout members of the Church felt themselves moved to organize such unions or societies also for the purpose of combating some prevalent heathen custom, or as a means of oppugning more effectually some particular sin or vice. For instance, there were confraternities against unchaste jests and conversations, against forbidden marriages, against intemperance in eating and drinking, etc. The faith and charity with which the Church was animated in the past, are still living and operating within the Church of to-day. One of the most laudable Christian enterprises of the present age—a work highly beneficial to the deceased as well as the living—is the Society against Extravagance at Christian Funerals. This Society, founded in England, has been spread to some extent in our own country, the United States of America. God grant that this Society, productive of so much good, may grow more and more in strength and influence for the spiritual benefit of the living and the dead!

108. To surround death with excessive indications of sorrow and mourning shows a deplorable degeneracy of the Christian spirit. The Divine Founder of our religion, who sent His own Paraclete to be our Consoler, has robbed death of its sting. "Death is swallowed up in victory." (I. Cor. xv. 54.) It is the object of the Christian religion to bring consolation to mankind on this very point. The natural feeling of a Christian at the burial of one of his brethren ought to be joyous, buoyed up by the hope of a blessed immortality, by trustful confidence and resignation to the will of God. O religion, truly divine, how consoling

thou art to the just! What a wellspring of joy dost thou open to him by the promise of a blissful eternity! What could give us greater consolation than the hope of another, better life, where sin, sorrow and death shall no longer reign? And this is the goal to which we are led by complete and perfect abandonment to the will of God. Whosoever truly desires to possess God, resigns himself fully to the dispositions of His Providence; he is discouraged at no trial, however severe; patiently he undergoes every probation. This resignation is the foundation of every virtue, it is a cause of true happiness; it is the virtue by which we attain to bliss here and hereafter.

109. The principal concern of a Christian in the hour of death should be the welfare of his soul and not the care of his body. His burial therefore ought to correspond with all these sentiments. But, alas! in our age the love of display at funerals has taken so deep roots that societies are founded for the purpose of providing the poor with the necessary means of gratifying at funerals this perverse sentiment of show and extravagance, thereby withdrawing the attention of the faithful from the soul of the deceased and directing it to the body. This is a perversion of the respect due to the dead, of which all those are guilty who ignorantly regard such extravagant demonstrations of mourning as tokens of honor and love. Real sorrow at the death of a member of one's family does not seek expression in a pompous funeral; therefore Christian burials ought to be models of simplicity. Such a society for the benefit of the poor ought to take for its aim to oppose all worldly display at fu-

nerals of this kind and to do away with costly monuments and unchristian symbols.

At burials the thoughts of a Christian should be directed to his last end; hence he should be more concerned about the soul of his deceased friend or relative than about his body. At the moment of its departure from the body the soul appears before God's judgment seat. Those who have departed in the state of grace, but whose works, though good, are yet found wanting in perfection, are sentenced to make atonement in Purgatory. However great our sorrow at parting from our loved ones naturally is, the thought that we can mitigate their sufferings is a truly consoling one, and calls our attention to the means by which this is to be done. Our very nature prompts us to pray for the deceased in general, and much more so for those who were dear to us in life. This sentiment, instilled into our souls by God, cannot be a false one; therefore alms and other works of suffrage for the Suffering Souls must be pleasing to God. But the most efficient means of relieving, consoling and releasing the Souls in Purgatory is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The Society against Extravagance at Funerals directs its principal efforts to procure for the Suffering Souls a truly Christian demonstration of love and respect. The personal expressions of sorrow in which the relatives indulge are rendered sacred in a special manner by the renunciation of a pompous funeral. This renunciation is an alms much more acceptable to God than any charitable gift to the poor; for by it many are dissuaded from lavish extravagance, whereas the gift of charity lends temporary assistance only to a few persons.

110. Moreover, the members of the Society endeavor to make extraordinary sacrifices for the benefit of the Suffering Souls. What others spend in the service of the world, they devote to the assistance of the poor, to the conversion of infidels and heretics, to the relief of poor convents and religious Orders, and to Holy Masses for the dead. They carefully avoid sin and lead a godly life; above all, they do not indulge in impurity, regarding their bodies as temples of the Holy Ghost. They patiently bear the trials and ills of life. All this they do for the special intention of bringing consolation and aid to the Suffering Souls in Purgatory.

Is it not most honorable to belong to such a confraternity or society and to be able to think: "I do my part and have my share in all the good achieved by it, in all the blessings dispensed through its agency?" Is it not a most noble charity to pray daily for our brethren? Is it not consoling to think: "Thousands pray for me every day?" Can we thereby not hope to receive many more graces? And are the numerous indulgences so easily gained by the members of a confraternity not of immense value? By them we shall be relieved of a lengthy punishment in the next world, and at the same time we can relieve souls now undergoing it. What should we desire others to do for us after our death? We should ask, not that they make an extravagant display at our funeral, but that they obtain for us the suffrages of our brethren and the services of the Church.—May God in His mercy imbue the hearts of the faithful more and more with such sentiments, and unite them in such confraternities for the welfare of the living and the relief of the Suffering Souls!

111. William V., Duke of Bavaria, ordered in his last will that at his funeral every kind of extravagant display shall be omitted. In particular he directed that no eulogy should be delivered, but in its place there should be a sermon on the art of dying well. He also ordered that before his interment in the church of St. Michael the funeral cortege should be preceded by the cross and a banner emblematic of death; that the bier should be attended by seventy old men and seventy old women in mourning, whom he had assisted in their poverty during life. He moreover forbade the erection of a monument, ordering in its place a plain cross with the inscription to be seen to-day: "Awed at Thy majesty I tremble for my sins; when Thou comest to judge me, O Lord, do not condemn me."

An example worthy of imitation was given also by the late Mr. Cooper, a lawyer in New York. In his last will he specified a small amount of money which must suffice to cover his funeral expenses, permitting no more carriages than were necessary for the members of his family. The sum thus saved was bequeathed to St. Francis hospital and other charitable institutions.

§ 25. The Efficacy of Holy Water in Behalf of the Suffering Souls.

112. The priest blesses water in the name of the Church, to be used for ritual purposes and by the faithful. The priest in reciting the form of the blessing makes the sign of the cross over the water, and mingles with it a little salt that has been previously blessed. The prayer recited is a petition that God may preserve those sprinkled with this water from the snares of

satan, grant them health of body and purity of soul, etc. Holy water is to remind us of the Sacred Blood of Christ, by which we are cleansed from sin, and whose prototype saved Israel from the Destroying Angel. It is moreover to exhort us that we should purify our souls by a chaste and pious life. Let us therefore remember how Jesus shed His Precious Blood amid excruciating torments to cleanse us from sin and to deliver us from the bondage of satan; let us pray to be more and more cleansed in the Blood of Jesus, and to be preserved from future sins. And may God, through the death of Him who vanquished satan by the shedding of His Blood, protect us in all dangers, and ward off from us all temporal and spiritual evils.

113. The prayer of the Church and the blessing of the priest are rendered efficacious through the merits of Christ. Hence the faithful and confident use of holy water is attended with great benefits for soul and body in life, and brings consolation to the souls of the faithful departed. The following are some of its effects:

a) It brings remission of venial sins to the souls in the state of grace.

b) By the devout use of it at least a part of the temporal punishment of sin is remitted.

c) It promotes the health of the body.

d) It puts to flight the evil spirits and guards us against their snares.

e) It prevents sickness and wards off other evil influences.

When we take holy water and sprinkle ourselves or our surroundings with it, the prayer of the Church ascends to heaven, drawing down blessings upon us

and on the objects that are sprinkled with it. The missionary, Father Alexander of Rodez, relates that his catechists wrought numerous miraculous cures by the sign of the cross and the sprinkling of holy water. Thus he once sent six catechists to a village sadly afflicted with sickness, and within a week they healed two hundred and seventy-two sick persons. Church history relates that holy water was also used to avert the plague of locusts. For instance Pope Stephen VI. had the fields devastated by locusts sprinkled with holy water blessed by himself, when these voracious insects suddenly disappeared.

114. Holy water may be used not only for the purpose of benefiting persons present, but may also be applied with the intention of procuring its blessed effects for the absent, and especially for the Suffering Souls. In this case the prayer of the Church ascends to heaven in favor of the person or soul intended to be helped. A drop of holy water is sometimes more effectual than a long prayer. Our prayer is often distracted and lukewarm; the prayer of the Church connected with holy water always pleases God, no matter when, where and by whom it is said—provided it be said in the name of the Church. Hence the Suffering Souls thirst for holy water, and could we but witness their yearning for a drop of it, we would certainly not omit to refresh them at least in the morning and evening and sometimes during the day with its sacred dew.

115. From the following private revelations we may conclude with what joy the Suffering Souls receive, and how yearningly they long for holy water. — A stranger had been buried in the *Campo santo* at Rome. Seventeen years afterwards he appeared to the

Venerable Dominic of Jesus-Mary, begging that the remains of his body might often be sprinkled with holy water, because thereby his soul would be refreshed. This same servant of God, as is customary with the Carmelites, had a skull always lying before him on his desk. One day he sprinkled this skull with holy water, when he heard a pitiful voice imploring him: "More holy water! More holy water!" The sprinkling of the holy water undoubtedly refreshed the soul and relieved its pains in the fiery prison.—To the Venerable Sister Frances of the Blessed Sacrament there often appeared a deceased Sister begging that her grave be sprinkled with holy water, because her soul was refreshed thereby.—The Venerable Lindmayer was frequently reminded by God to sprinkle the remains of the deceased with holy water, and she was accustomed, before retiring, to sprinkle the souls that appeared to her. Once she forgot to do so, when the souls continued to implore her till she rose from her bed and complied with their request.

The following is related by the learned divine Mendo in his life of St. Martin, canon regular of Liege, the manuscript of which is still preserved in the convent of St. Isidor: "There were many saints who were privileged to enjoy the visible intercourse of their guardian angels; and this holy servant of God during his whole life was similarly attended by the soul of a priest from Purgatory. This soul revealed to him, among other particulars concerning the punishments of that state of purification, that the souls felt a great mitigation of the pain of fire as often as the faithful sprinkled with holy water the graves in which their

bodies were buried, feeling its effect in about the same manner as when in life a person overcome by heat is refreshed with water.

116. With regard to the use of holy water the directions of the Church and the example of our ancestors are the unerring compass which we must follow. Hence, if we desire to be worthy children of the Church and of our glorious predecessors in the faith, we must do as follows: As often as we enter a church, we ought to sprinkle ourselves with holy water, dipping our bare fingers into it and devoutly making the sign of the cross. Thereby we drive away satan, and excite ourselves to recollection in prayer. On Sundays we should assist at the sprinkling of holy water which takes place regularly before the parochial Mass. We should not omit to have holy water at home, preserving it in an appropriate vessel and in a decent place. In Catholic Europe there was a time when not a house was to be found in city or country, no matter how rich or poor the dwellers therein, where holy water, the crucifix and sacred images were not kept. Even to-day we find these indications of a true religious spirit wherever true faith has a home.—The use of holy water is very ancient. Some are of the opinion that it was introduced by the apostles. Its introduction in homes where its use was hitherto unknown, would go far to revive the spirit of faith.

117. If hitherto we have made use of holy water from custom, simply because we were thus trained, let us henceforth do so from a conviction of its usefulness and with due regard to its purposes. Convinced that we give great consolation to the souls in Purgatory by the devout application of holy water, can we regard it

as troublesome to give a drop to them on leaving or entering the room? It is a commendable custom when using holy water to give one drop for ourselves and the loving members of our family to receive protection for soul and body; a drop for the dying, especially dying sinners, that God may be moved to grant them the grace of conversion; and a third drop for the Suffering Souls in Purgatory. Oh, how much of blessing and true welfare, of merit and grace we would obtain during the course of the year for our dear ones and for innumerable others by this easy practice, thereby gaining a great number of intercessors during life, in death, and for the time of our own purification in Purgatory! As often as we perform this service for the Suffering Souls, they will requite it by interçeding for us with an ardor impossible to the most saintly persons on earth. And God willingly hears their prayer, it being the prayer of His elect, and vouchsafes an immeasurable amount of grace to their helpers.

118. Hence the devout Christian, who is zealous for the glory of God and intent on his salvation and on the release of the Suffering Souls, makes it a practice to use holy water often—at home as well as in church. He sprinkles himself on entering the church and on leaving it; he is careful to keep it at home, and sprinkles himself on rising in the morning, before leaving the house, and before retiring for the night. Many zealous Christians make it a practice to take holy water as they enter or leave a room, in temptation, danger of lightning, etc. Good parents bless their children with it every evening.

When using this salutary sacramental, let us pray that God, for the sake of our Redeemer's Blood, may

grant to the souls in Purgatory refreshment in their pains and speedy relief.—Behold how light and fleeting the vapor of steam: yet these few drops of diluted water are powerful enough to move enormous burdens! How small and inconsiderable is a gnat, how insignificant its sting; yet under certain circumstances such a sting may cause death! Now, if things so small and apparently so insignificant may cause death, why should not small things have saving properties? A drop of holy water possesses them. Oh, what comfort it gives to a Suffering Soul!—Deodatus, one of the ancient Fathers of the desert, remarks: "As the flowers withering in the heat of the sun are refreshed by the rain, so also the souls in Purgatory—these flowers elect of heaven, scorched by the Sun of eternal Justice—are refreshed by the devout application of holy water." Hence the cry of Dives in hell: "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tips of his fingers in water, to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame." (Luke xvi. 24.) His request was refused. "But," says the learned Eck, "when the souls in Purgatory thus address us, saying, 'My brother in Christ, dip the tip of your finger in holy water and cool us, for we are tormented in this flame of Purgatory,' oh, do not refuse to do so, but grant them this consolation!"

§ 26. The Burning of Blessed Candles is Beneficial to the Suffering Souls.

119. God Himself in the Old Law ordained that lights should be used in His temple and at the religious rites performed there. For this purpose He gave the minutest directions: "Thou shalt make a candle-

stick of beaten work of the finest gold.....Thou shalt make also seven lamps, and shalt set them upon the candlestick, to give light over against." (Exod. xxv. 31, 37.) These lamps were to burn continually. "Command the children of Israel that they bring thee the purest oil of olives, and beaten with a pestle : that a lamp may burn always in the tabernacle of the testimony. And Aaron and his sons shall order it, that it may give light before the Lord until morning. It shall be a perpetual observance throughout their successions among the children of Israel." (Exod. xxvii. 20, 21.)

120. Under the Christian dispensation the use of lights was retained not only when the sacred mysteries were celebrated at night during times of persecution, but also during the day. In the early Church those selected to take care of the lamps and candles were specially ordained for this purpose. This minor order of acolytes is still conferred by the Church. And because candles and lamps are used at divine service, the Church blesses them. The burning lamp or candle signifies Christ, the eternal Light, which we implore in our prayers to shine upon the departed. At the same time they are also a continual admonition for the living to remember their deceased brethren ; they are an alms for the Suffering Souls symbolizing charity; for as the flame gradually consumes the blessed candle, thus charity reduces the torments of the purifying fire. St. Anthanasius lays great stress on this pious custom. He says, "Though the deceased is buried in the earth, thou must not omit to burn oil and wax on his grave, for this is pleasing to God and merits great reward. Oil and wax are an offering, the

Holy Sacrifice is a propitiation, and alms given to the poor is an increase of recompense."

121. The tombs, particularly those of the martyrs and saints, were adorned even at the time of the early persecutions. Hence St. Thomas, with St. John Damascene, declared that oil was among the gifts offered in early times for the relief of the departed. In the middle ages the custom prevailed and in certain countries, for instance in Southern Germany, has descended to our times, the custom, namely, of burning lamps on the graves throughout the year, or at least during certain seasons of the year. The Church sanctions this pious practice by recognizing provisions for this purpose, and by burning numerous lights at all her solemnities. This custom is observed particularly in places of pilgrimage, in convents, etc., where a number of lamps are kept burning day and night during Triduums or Novenas for the souls in Purgatory. At St. John's Protectory, West Seneca, New York, there are often over three hundred lamps burning for this intention. In the basilica of our Lady of the Sacred Heart, at Issodoun, France, over one hundred lamps are kept continually lighted; numerous lamps burn for this same devout purpose in the House of the missionaries of the Sacred Heart at West De Pere, Wisconsin; at Loreto, in Italy; at Einsiedeln, Switzerland, etc., in all of which places provision is made to satisfy the individual devotion of those who desire such lamps to be lighted on the altar.

122. Finally, examples are not wanting to prove that this pious custom is acceptable to the souls in Purgatory, and legendary lore knows of touching incidents showing that God Himself sometimes gave

evidence of His approval of this practice. A lamp at the tomb of St. Thomas the apostle continued burning during the fiercest storms, sometimes even after the oil was consumed. The same is related concerning St. Gregory and St. Constantine. The efforts of the evil spirit to extinguish the lamps of St. Genevieve, in Paris, were ineffectual; the symbol of virginity continued to shed its light. Boudon relates that a deceased person appeared to a relative and complained bitterly that the customary number of candles had not been offered at his funeral. Also, that pitiful moaning was heard in a house where it had been neglected one Saturday to light the customary "Poor Souls' Candle."—A priest vouches for the following which he related to the author: A peasant of his acquaintance, in the Tyrol, attempted during three nights to steal fruit from his neighbor's orchard. Every time he came near the place, a light either came toward him, or moved in a circle around the house. Later he confessed his guilt to the owner, observing that the latter must have a vigilant guard. The man replied that he knew of no guard, except that it was his custom to burn a candle every evening for the Suffering Souls, and that these grateful spirits must have guarded his property.

§ 27. Effect of Indulgences on the Suffering Souls.

123. It is of faith, that if Christ had shed but one single drop of His Most Precious Blood, this would have sufficed for the salvation of all mankind. As He has shed all His Blood for us, and moreover, as all His labors and sufferings possess infinite value to atone

for all sins and their punishment—where is the immense treasury thus merited for mankind? Surely, it was not the will of God that it should, so to say, be lost or become unprofitable. Whom, then, has God entrusted with all these infinite merits of the passion and death of Christ?—They were placed into the treasury of the Church, to be always at the disposal of the faithful. The same is true of all the supererogatory merits and atonements of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints. The works of Christ are satisfactory by reason of their own proper value, while those of the saints are satisfactory only through the grace of Christ, which gives them their worth. The superfluous satisfactions of the saints, or those which they did not need for payment of their own debts, are added to the merits of Christ, not by way of supplement, since His satisfactions are superabundantly sufficient, but by way of accumulation or fruit, or of interest accruing from His satisfactory merits. This is a consequence of the communion of saints, whereby one member of the Church communicates in all the spiritual goods of the others, since they are members of one body, in organic union with its Head.

124. According to the doctrine of the Church, the *guilt* of sin and its *eternal* punishment is remitted in the sacrament of Penance. The *temporal* punishment due to sin however is not always remitted *entirely* in the sacrament of Penance, as is done in Baptism. This remaining temporal punishment, as long as it is not remitted, must be suffered either in this world or in Purgatory, before we can enter heaven. Satisfaction for temporal punishment is made by the works of penance imposed in the sacrament of Penance and

united with the merits of Christ, and is applied to us by the power of binding and loosing granted to the Church. By this same power works of penance are imposed on us outside the sacrament of Penance for the purpose of gaining indulgences. Finally, satisfaction is also rendered by voluntary works of penance, and by unavoidable sufferings borne with patience and resignation—all this in union with the merits of Christ.

An indulgence therefore is the remission of the temporal punishment due to sin which the Church grants to the faithful, provided they observe certain conditions. The entire temporal punishment is remitted by a plenary indulgence; a part of it only by a partial indulgence. The Council of Trent declares that "the use of indulgences is in the highest degree wholesome to the Christian people; that the Church was empowered by Christ to grant them, and has made use of this power from the earliest ages: and that because their use is approved of by the councils, they are to be retained in the Church."

125. By an indulgence the temporal punishment is remitted only on certain conditions; that is, the gaining of the indulgence is made dependent on the performing of certain specified good works. By the faithful performance of these works the temporal punishment is atoned for; or rather, to state it more exactly, the punishment is thereby counterbalanced. However, not every temporal punishment incurred by sin can be remitted by indulgences. For the temporal punishment of sin can be threefold: first, punishments of a natural order—for instance poverty, sickness, disgrace, etc.; secondly, punishments inflicted by Provi-

dence and to be undergone in this world and in Purgatory; thirdly, punishments fixed by the penitential code of the Church, by which she ordained certain penances for certain sins. To maintain that the punishments of the natural order are remitted by indulgences would be saying too much, for the natural consequences of sin can be removed only by divine interposition. An indulgence therefore can be nothing more than the remission of one or both of the two other kinds of punishment mentioned, because for the remission of these punishments no change of the natural order is necessary. These two kinds of punishment being inflicted by the will of God, they must also be remitted by this same divine will.

We now come to the question: Who can declare that certain temporal punishments of sin are remitted?—It cannot be denied that the Church of Christ has this power; but she has not the power to change the natural order established by God. When God has fixed a punishment, the Church cannot summarily declare this punishment to be remitted; she can only replace it by a punishment of some other kind. This she does by adding to certain penitential works to be performed by the penitent with scrupulous exactitude the infinite merits of Christ committed to her treasury, thus rendering them so valuable that they replace the punishment fixed by God.

126. To gain an indulgence the first rule to be observed is contained in the motto: "All for the greater glory of God!" If we were intent only on our own profit or that of the deceased, without regard to the glory of God, we would not gain the indulgence. We must seek our own salvation and that of others

because it is the will of God that we should. The more the love of God is increased in our hearts, the easier it will be for us to overcome our natural evil inclinations. If we have triumphed over every voluntary, conscious inclination to sin, then we are in the condition requisite for gaining an indulgence. For to gain a plenary indulgence we must be without sin; not only without mortal sin, but without unrepented venial sin, yea, without voluntary, conscious inclination even to venial sin, which though venial is nevertheless sin. By a plenary indulgence we are delivered entirely from the punishment of sin, so that we would be admitted to heaven immediately in case we should die right after gaining such an indulgence.

As often as we desire to gain a plenary indulgence, let us strive to fulfil with the greatest purity of heart the conditions that are prescribed. If we do not gain the indulgence to its whole extent, we may be sure that we will gain at least a part of it.

127. The power of the Church to apply indulgences to the faithful departed is a consequence of the intimate union existing between the Church militant and the Church suffering. This is evident from the papal Bulls. Moreover, the doctrine that the living can come to the relief of the dead is clearly contained in Holy Scripture, and is handed down to us by the most ancient tradition. It is evident that if private suffrages relieve the Suffering Souls, the suffrages authorized by the popes, and for which they granted an indulgence, must have the same effect. Heretics, for example Luther, Calvin, etc., deny that the Church has the power of granting indulgences applicable to the souls in Purgatory. The Church has ever pro-

claimed the doctrine that she can aid the Suffering Souls by indulgences. St. Thomas Aquinas declares it to be a custom of the Church to grant indulgences not only to the living, but also for the benefit of the dead. Pope Sixtus IV. condemned the doctrine of Osma, who maintained that the pope had no power to release the punishments of Purgatory. Pope Leo IX. declared it to be the continued doctrine of the Roman Church, that the pope had the power of granting indulgences for the benefit of the living and the dead.

128. Since, however, the Church on earth has no jurisdiction over the souls of the dead, she cannot apply indulgences to them *in the same manner* as she does to the living. To the latter she grants indulgences by way of judicial sentence and absolution, to to the former she does so by way of suffrage. That is, the Church in applying indulgences to the dead offers to God the satisfaction made by the good works of the faithful and rendered meritorious through the merits of Christ; in doing so she petitions the Most High that, in view of the offered payment, He would deign in His mercy to remit the whole or a part of the debt of temporal punishment still weighing on the soul of the deceased. In granting an indulgence to the living the pope's act may be compared to that of a man who gives the means of payment into the hands of the person indebted, thereby enabling him to release himself from prison; in granting an indulgence for the dead he may be said to act like a man who offers payment of the debt to the creditor, asking that in his mercy he might release the prisoner.

It has always been the practice of the popes to grant numerous indulgences applicable to the Suffer-

ing Souls; by the gaining of which indulgences we cede to these imprisoned friends of God so much remission of temporal punishment as we would have obtained for ourselves. The charity of Holy Church for the souls in Purgatory has always been the same; in her love and compassion she continually invents new means and methods of assisting them. She has granted indulgences for various devotions, exercises, prayers, etc., in order that all her children might ever co-operate with her the more readily and willingly in the grand work of relieving and rescuing the Suffering Souls.

129. God does not always bestow the indulgence on that soul for whom we intend to gain it, especially if the soul be that of a Christian, who during his life in this world was negligent in gaining indulgences and relieving the Suffering Souls; for divine justice deals according to the words of Christ, "With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." (Matth. VII. 2.) It is probable in such a case that God applies the indulgence to some other soul more pleasing to Him; and this soul will then be very grateful to the person by whose charity it is released from Purgatory. The same is due with regard to Masses said for a certain soul at a privileged altar with the intention that the indulgence granted in consequence of the privilege may be applied for the release of that soul from Purgatory. When the indulgence is refused to the soul for whom it was intended, God will probably grant it to some one of its relatives in Purgatory; or it may be given to a soul who in this world was assiduous in prayer for the Suffering Souls, but is now forgotten. This may some-

times be the case with poor persons, who during their life on this earth remembered the Suffering Souls by prayer and good works, but who, for want of means on the part of their relations, do not receive the benefit of even one Holy Sacrifice after their death.

130. St. Magdalen of Pazzi and the religious of her convent were confirmed in their zeal to gain indulgences for the Suffering Souls by the release of one of the Sisters, who after her death had to suffer in Purgatory for fifteen hours, and was then released on account of the indulgences gained for her by the inmates of the convent. She revealed to St. Magdalen that this speedy deliverance was due to the zeal she had herself manifested during life to gain indulgences for the Suffering Souls.

It was revealed to St. Bridget that many and great punishments are remitted on account of indulgences, so that whosoever departs this life after having gained a plenary indulgence before consenting to another sin, is admitted to heaven the same as one dying in his baptismal innocence.—At Venice there lived a pious priest who intended to make a pilgrimage to Asssisi in order to gain the great indulgence of Portiuncula. Falling sick before he was able to do so, he requested a friend to gain the indulgence and to apply it for his release from Purgatory in case he should die. Soon after he departed this life, but his friend postponed the gaining of the indulgence. One day the deceased appeared to him quite disconsolate, and asked him: "Why do you postpone so long the good work I so ardently implored you to perform? Go at least now, I pray, and gain the indulgence for me!" The friend did so, and the deceased appeared to him radi-

ant as the sun, telling him that by the indulgence he had been released from Purgatory and was now on his way to heaven.

As we may take it for granted that many of our relatives, friends, benefactors, etc. are in Purgatory, where they have to undergo severe punishment, who amongst us should not be most zealously intent on gaining for them as many indulgences as possible, thereby to release these poor captives from their prison?

§ 28. Fasting for the Benefit of the Suffering Souls.

131. Everybody in this world experiences in himself two conflicting powers, which are described by St. Paul as follows: "I am delighted with the law of God according to the inward man: but I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin, that is in my members." (Rom. VII. 22, 23.) Reason and religion demand that in this combat of the "inward man" we decide in his favor against sin. Our soul is immortal, the breath of God, His image. Our body is a handful of clay, soon to moulder in the grave. What does it matter if the body, a food for worms, be made to suffer, if only the immortal soul be saved? Of what consequence is it, if the body die, if only the soul lives? St. Paul was the apostle of the gentiles, a light of the world, a vessel of election; nevertheless he felt it a necessary duty to bring his body into subjection. He says, "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway." (I. Cor. IX. 27.) Many Christians are filled with terror of their adversary, the

devil, of whom St. Peter says that "as a roaring lion he goeth about seeking whom he may devour" (I. Pet. v, 8.); but let them know that the devil himself with all his cunning and power is not able to injure their souls as much as they themselves may injure it by pampering their flesh. Let us bear in mind that the assaults of hell are greatly weakened by the mortification of our flesh. If we hate satan, then how much more should we hate our flesh, which is more treacherous than satan! During mortal life the souls in Purgatory did not always have a due regard for the final results of vain pleasures, but often looked only to the momentary gratification of their senses. Hence they must now atone even for the least inordinate enjoyment of sensual pleasure.

132. In order to help the Suffering Souls, we must render satisfaction to God for the sins that offended Him. We must satisfy the demands of divine justice by corresponding works of atonement, works by which God is glorified, and man is deprived of some enjoyment in penalty for the sinful gratification in which he wrongfully indulged. Now it is manifest that God is glorified by every good work; whereas to fallen man every good work is troublesome and painful, so that the performance of such a work deprives him of some kind of gratification. Hence every good work has a propitiatory quality. As in prayer we consecrate our whole being to God, trampling under foot the pride of life by the humility of supplication, so also do we by fasting deny ourselves in atonement for the rebellion of our flesh against the law of God. By fasting we chastise our body, refuse gratification to its appetite, give strength to our soul and pleasure to our whole

spiritual being. Fasting is directed against the lusts of the flesh and the sins proceeding therefrom, against all forbidden pleasures and enjoyments. By fasting, therefore, we atone for the sins committed by and against our body. Instead of applying this atonement to ourselves, we can offer it to Almighty God in union with the fast of Christ in favor of the Suffering Souls.

133. To propitiate the offended majesty of God was the end for which St. John the Baptist performed such austere penance. Of His fore-runner our Savior Himself said that "there hath not risen among them that are born of woman a greater" (Matth. XI. 11.); and yet "he was clothed with camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and he ate locusts and wild honey." (Mark I. 6.) Our Divine Redeemer Himself, "the Way, the Truth and the Life," (John XIV. 6.), gives us an example of the efficacy and value of fasting. To prepare Himself for the great work of redemption He observed a fast of forty days and forty nights. To appease divine wrath and to obtain mercy for his people, Moses "fell down before the Lord as before, forty days and nights neither eating bread nor drinking water, for all your sins which you had committed against the Lord, and had provoked Him to wrath: for I feared His indignation and anger, wherewith being moved against you, He would have destroyed you. And the Lord heard me this time also." (Deuter. IX. 18, 19.) This clearly demonstrates how efficient fasting is to obtain God's mercy.—Christian soul, comtemplate the torments of Purgatory! Let your heart be moved to compassion for the Suffering Souls. Follow the example of Moses, thereby to release these poor spouses of Christ!

134. Lysimachus, king of Thracia, while surrounded by his enemies, suffered severely from thirst. To obtain water he delivered himself and his army to the enemy, thus sacrificing his liberty and his kingdom for a drink. David, the royal prophet, acted differently. Surrounded by his enemies, and exhausted by the fatigues of battle, he exclaimed, "O that some man would give me water from the cistern of Bethlehem, which is in the gate!" (1. Paralip XI. 17.) The water was brought to him by three captains of his army, who risked their lives in fetching it from the cistern. "And he would not drink of it, but offered it to the Lord."—A soul thus master of its appetite and inclinations is capable of every virtue and will surely be rewarded by the Lord.

We might mention ever so many signal blessings which the saints obtained by fasting and prayer; but we confine ourselves to two examples. The Blessed Cecilia, a Dominican nun, was accustomed to mortify herself in drinking, thereby to honor the sacred thirst of our Lord on the cross, and to quench the flames of Purgatory. After her death she appeared to one of the Sisters, and revealed to her that immediately on her entrance into Purgatory an angel appeared bearing a golden vase from which he poured water into the flames, and then led her to heaven.—King Sancio having died of poison, the queen prayed day and night for the repose of his soul, and on Saturdays fasted on bread and water in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her husband appeared to her thanking her for her penitential suffrages, and begging her to continue them. After this apparition she persevered in fasting and prayer for forty days. Then she saw him again

surrounded by heavenly splendor, and heard him address her with these words: "Now I am released from my torments. I owe it to you, my pious queen; may God bless you for it throughout all eternity."

135. In order that our fasting may be beneficial to the Suffering Souls, it is not enough for us to abstain from food and drink, but we must also refrain from committing sin. Our fasting, to be efficient for the release of the captive souls from their prison, must be done according to the spirit of God. Our Lord says by the mouth of the prophet, "Is not this rather the fast that I have chosen? Loose the hands of wickedness, undo bundles that oppress, let them that are broken go free, and break asunder every burden. Deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the needy and the harborless into thy house; when thou shalt see one naked, cover him, and despise not thine own flesh." (Isai. LVIII. 6, 7.) Through the same prophet the Lord rejects fasting that is not attended by self-denial. "Behold in the day of your fast your own will is found, and you exact of all your debtors," (meaning, that stubbornness and want of charity render our fasting useless); "behold you fast for debates and strife, and strike with the fist wickedly. Do not fast as you have done unto this day, to make your cry be heard on high." (Isai. LVIII. 3, 4.)—If you desire to relieve the Suffering Souls, the bonds of iniquity that bind your soul must be loosed, your soul must not be held captive by pride, avarice, impurity, envy and other vices.

Let us, then, fast by abstaining from hatred, anger, impurity, slander, etc.; in a word, let us fast by our works. If you see a person in distress, come to his

relief; if your neighbor is prosperous, do not envy him. Let your hands fast by keeping them from acquiring unjustly what is not yours; your heart, by guarding it against covetousness; your feet, by preventing them from going to dangerous amusements. How often have we neglected all this, and yet it is an essential condition if our fasting is to be meritorious for the Suffering Souls! Let us therefore remember the exhortation of St. Augustine: "What will it avail us if we abstain from wine, but are intoxicated with anger; if we abstain from flesh meat, but like wild animals destroy the reputation and good name of our neighbors?"

136. St. Francis of Sales relates that a mother released her son from Purgatory by performing an heroic act of charity. He had been murdered, and his mother not only forgave the murderer, but shielded him from justice. Her son was permitted to appear to her; and he told her that this charity had pleased God so much, that his whole punishment in Purgatory, which would otherwise have lasted for years, had been remitted to him.—Count Hyacinth of St. Florent was executed during the French revolution. His sister Hermania was so embittered against his enemies, that she refused the sacraments and mourned excessively for her brother. On the fifteenth anniversary of his death he appeared to his sister, and complained of her heartlessness, whereas he had so tenderly loved her in life. "Your tears and despair," he said, "do not help me. I yearn for your prayer, that it may help me to atone for my faults." Hermania deplored her mistake, and for the first time offered up a prayer for the murderers of her brother that God might have

mercy on him. She then continued in works of charity and mercy for twenty-five years, and at her death her brother appeared to her in heavenly splendor.—The chronicles of the convent of St. Teudon relate that one of the monks, who died about the year 1250, was released from Purgatory by the patient suffering of a woman who meekly bore the harsh treatment of her husband.—And who can estimate how many Suffering Souls were released by the self-denials of so many saints, for instance St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Malachy, St. Patrick, St. Bridget, St. Lidwina, St. Elisabeth, and innumerable others?

Let us, then, fast not only by abstaining from bodily food, but also in a spiritual sense, by mortifying our passions. Following the example of the saints, let us bear all our trials and sufferings with patience and resignation, offering them for the relief of the Suffering Souls. Let us say as often as a misfortune or adversity befalls us, "I will bear it patiently and offer it up for the release of my dear father, mother, brother, sister and other relatives, thereby to open to them the portals of paradise."

§ 29. Alms-deeds Release the Suffering Souls.

137. We read in Holy Scripture: "Water quencheth a flaming fire, and alms resisteth sin." (Eccli. III. 33.) And: "Lay out thy bread and thy wine upon the burial of a just man." (Tob. IV. 18.) Does Tobias here instruct his son to remember the dead by feasting? Not at all; but according to Lyranus he taught him to feed the poor and to do other works of mercy at the death of the just, for he said to him, "Prayer is good with fasting and alms, more than to

lay up treasures of gold; for alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purges away sins and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting." (Tob. XII. 8, 9.)—Pope Benedict VIII. after his death appeared to the bishop of Capua and said, "Know that I have died; and though I am in the state of grace, yet I am greatly tormented in Purgatory. Therefore I pray thee, tell my successor John to give alms to the poor, for then I shall be released from my insupportable torments." His request was fulfilled; and he was soon released from Purgatory on account of the alms distributed for his sake.

138. It is scarcely necessary to add, that alms given for the Suffering Souls help to atone for our own sins of extravagance, sins proceeding from the abuse of wealth; and that this is almost the only way of attaining salvation for those who live in affluence. "If it were not possible," observes St. Chrysostom, "to atone for our misdeeds by alms, we might have reason to complain and say, 'Oh, how happy we should be if the gates of heaven could be opened by money, if we could purchase the glory of the saints by means of our earthly possessions!' Now, my brother, this is very easy of accomplishment; therefore avail yourself of this privilege. Before you lose your wealth, hasten to place it at the disposal of the Suffering Souls, as the price of their eternal salvation. Perhaps you will lose it by the malice of man; perhaps your passions will consume it; at all events death will deprive you of it sooner or later: charity alone insures you against this misfortune and renders you its possessor forever. You will prevent the loss of your earthly possessions by consigning them to the tabernacles of God, where

you will enjoy them for all eternity along with the souls released by means of them." Thus speaks the Holy Ghost in the Book of Tobias: "Give alms out of thy substance, and turn not away thy face from any poor person; for so it shall come to pass that the face of the Lord shall not be turned from thee." (Tob. IV. 7.)—Eusebius, duke of Sardinia, devoted the tenth part of his revenue to the relief of the Suffering Souls; his charity even went so far, that he gave to the poor the annual income of one of his cities, thereby to succor the suffering spouses of Christ in Purgatory. Might we not follow his example by devoting to the same purpose part of the proceeds of a certain business undertaking, of the rent of a certain house, of the interest of certain out-standing capital?

139. We must remember that the surplus of our wealth does not belong to us, but to the poor; and that it is our bounden duty to make use of only so much of it as corresponds with our state of life. We must one day render a strict account of the use we have made of our possessions. But our Divine Savior does not claim a great part of our wealth and property. He does not strike us with sudden death like Ananias and Saphira, who secretly retained part of the proceeds of their property. He is satisfied if we devote a small part of what we possess to relieve the Suffering Souls. It is His will that the wealthy who spend on superfluous articles of dress sums of money sufficient to relieve a great number of poor, should also do something to clothe the Suffering Souls; that is, they should aid these Souls to enter into eternal glory by relieving in their behalf the distress of the poor. The punishment of Purgatory is inflicted on

many a soul who during its earthly life was wanting in charity to the poor. Oh, let us therefore hasten to appease the wrath of God by charity! By so doing we will gain the grateful friendship of those whom we have relieved in their suffering and ransomed from their painful captivity. They will aid us in working out our own salvation.

140. But alas, how small is the number of those who practically recognize alms-giving as one of the essential duties of a Christian!—Still there are some—devout Christians, mindful of the distress and misery of the Suffering Souls—who do not pride themselves merely in being persons of rank and wealth—no; but they consider themselves rather as being members of the mystical body of Christ, and as such, brethren of the Suffering Souls. Forsooth, how can a Christian enjoy true happiness as long as he is convinced that these just souls are suffering in a lake of fire? If he is not moved to compassion by this consideration, he is devoid of every human feeling, and acts contrary to the dictates of reason and religion. A man so regardless of a most sacred duty would be regarded as a bad citizen even by a pagan commonwealth; he would be despised for his meanness, hardness of heart and ignobility of character even by the votaries of the unchristian world: how must he then be regarded by the Church of Christ? As a monster unworthy the name of Christian, disgracing the faith he professes, the sacraments he receives, the holy temple he enters; for they are all symbols of Christian concord and charity.—In the next world, too, divine justice is meted out most rigorously to those who neglect the giving of alms for the relief of the Suffering Souls. "For

judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy." (James II. 13.)

141. According to this declaration of the Holy Ghost, what kind of judgment must he expect, who from miserly greed permits the soul of a relative or benefactor to languish for months, years, perhaps for centuries in the horrible torments of Purgatory? Such persons sometimes receive just retribution even in this world. Father Rosignoli relates that a splendid farm was ruined by a terrific storm, whilst the adjoining fields were spared. A soul from Purgatory thereupon declared in an apparition, that the owners had been thus visited in punishment for their ingratitude towards their deceased parents.—A soul appearing to a relative, thus addressed him: "Ungrateful nephew, you had no compassion for the soul of your uncle. Remember your promise, man with a heart harder than stone! In consequence of your faithlessness I had to suffer indescribable torments in Purgatory. To-day I enter into the bliss of the saints; but you shall die, and in retribution for your neglect the whole time I still owe shall be added to your term of suffering." A few days later the man died, and went to receive his sentence at the tribunal of God.

142. Not only the wealthy, but also the poor are able to give alms, if they only have the good will. The angels sang at the birth of our Savior, "On earth peace to men of good will." (Luke II. 14.) Hence many good Catholics combine and unite their savings for the purpose of procuring Masses for the repose of the souls of the faithful departed. And in order to assist these souls the more effectually, they direct their efforts also to the conversion of non-Catholics,

in the hope that thereby the prayers for the relief of the Suffering Souls may be increased more and more. They have not the mission to preach the Gospel to the heathen and unbeliever, but they pray for the Suffering Souls; they contribute something every month to assist poor students preparing for the priesthood, or for the support of Catholic schools or missionaries, poor churches, orphan asylums and protectories, etc. —all this for the purpose that the Catholic Church may become known to and loved by all nations. By the prayers of these charitable souls our Lord is implored to show mercy to the captives in Purgatory, to release them speedily, to bless the efforts of the missionaries, to grant the grace of conversion to all unbelievers, and to protect all the members of their union. Their motto is, "All for the greater glory of God and of His saints, and for the relief of the Suffering Souls."

143. God often rewards even in this world these efforts for the relief of the Suffering Souls, and gives a hundred-fold increase to these little alms-deeds.— The Rev. Father James Montford, of the Society of Jesus, born in England in 1605, wrote a remarkable work on Purgatory. In this work the author mentions that the following incident was revealed to him in a letter written by William Friesen, a printer of Cologne: "On a certain holyday, when my place of business was closed, I was occupying myself in reading the manuscript of your book on 'The Souls in Purgatory,' which you sent me to print. While absorbed in the perusal of your work, a messenger came and told me that my youngest child, aged four years, showed the symptoms of a very grave disease. The

child rapidly grew worse, and the physicians at length declared that there was no hope for its recovery. The thought then occurred to me that I could save my child by making a vow to assist the Suffering Souls in Purgatory. Without delay I repaired to a chapel and with all fervor supplicated God to have pity on me; and I vowed that I would distribute gratuitously one hundred copies of the book that had awakened in me such a hearty sympathy for the Suffering Souls. I promised that I would give the books to ecclesiastics and religious, thereby to increase devotion to the Holy Souls. I acknowledge that I had hardly any hope. As soon as I returned to the house, I found the child much better. He asked for food, although for several days he had not been able to swallow anything but liquids. The next day he was perfectly well, got up and went out for a walk, and ate as if nothing had ever ailed him. Filled with gratitude I was anxious to fulfil my promise. I went to the College of the Jesuit Fathers and begged them to accept as many copies of the work as they pleased, and to distribute them among themselves and other communities and ecclesiastics as they saw fit, in order that my benefactors, the Suffering Souls, might be assisted by further prayers offered in their behalf.

"Three weeks had not passed by, however, when another accident quite as serious befell me. My wife, on entering the house one day, was suddenly seized with a trembling in all her limbs. She was thrown to the ground and remained lying there insensible. Little by little the illness increased until she was deprived of speech. Remedies seemed to be in vain. The malady at length assumed such aggravated pro-

portions that everyone thought she had no chance whatever of recovery. The priest who assisted her had already addressed words of consolation to me, exhorting me to Christian resignation. I turned again with confidence to the souls in Purgatory, who had assisted me once before, and I went to the same church. There prostrate before the Blessed Sacrament I renewed my supplication with all the ardor with which affection for my family inspired me. This time I made a vow to distribute two hundred copies of the book, in order that a greater number of persons might be moved to intercede for the Suffering Souls. I besought those who had already been delivered from Purgatory to unite their prayers with mine on this occasion. After this prayer, as I was returning to the house, I saw my servants running towards me. They told me with delight that my wife had undergone a great change for the better; that the delirium had ceased and that she had recovered her power of speech. I hurried in at once to assure myself of the fact: all was true. Very soon my wife was so perfectly recovered that she came with me to church to make an act of thanksgiving to God for all His mercies.—Your Reverence may confidently believe me: God is my witness that all happened just as I have related it to you."

144. God does not so much regard the amount of alms given as He does the heart of the one who gives it. The poor widow in the Gospel (Luke XXI. 3.) was able to give only two mites; the good thief had nothing to give but the resolve of a true conversion. Yet both were acceptable to God.—Our charity must be commensurate with our means. "According to thy ability

be merciful. If thou have much, give abundantly: if thou have little, take care even so to bestow willingly a little." (Tob. IV. 8, 9.) If this be our rule, our alms will be acceptable to God; the mite of the poor will be of greater value in His eyes than the abundancy of the rich. But the will alone is not sufficient when the means of helping the Poor Souls are at our command. "And if a brother or sister be naked, and want daily food, and one of you say to them: Go in peace, be you warmed and filled: yet give them not those things that are necessary for the body, what shall it profit?" (James III. 15, 16.) To every such Christian St. Paul addresses the following words of exhortation: "Let him labor working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have something to give to him that suffereth need." (Ephes. IV. 28.)

Good Christians feel within themselves an ardent desire to relieve the suffering of the Poor Souls; and therefore they will do all in their power to satisfy this desire. They often make the greatest sacrifices for this purpose; and if they find it impossible to give material aid, they at least devote a part of their time and labor to this praiseworthy object. This can be done for instance by exhorting others to this work of suffrage. And the number of those who offer to God all their labors, sufferings and good works for a more speedy relief of the Suffering Souls is by no means small.

145. Charity sometimes impels a man to endanger his life for the benefit of his fellow-man. The same may be done to promote the spiritual life of our fellow-men. St. Catherine of Siena implored God to permit the soul of her father to enter heaven without undergoing the punishment of Purgatory. When the

Supreme Judge declared to her that it was indispensably necessary that His Justice should be satisfied, she offered to bear the full rigor of her father's punishment. Her offer was accepted; and thenceforth her life was one of continued suffering and trial.—Yet, so many persons think that a small sacrifice, a prayer of some months' or years' duration, a suffering patiently borne, the Holy Sacrifice offered up once in a while during the year, should suffice to release their dear ones from Purgatory. St. Catherine of Genoa says of herself, that she was permitted to suffer the torments of Purgatory for the space of two years—to suffer so much of these torments as it is possible for any mortal to endure. It may not be possible for us to do this. But if we only have the good will, we certainly can devote some time to prayer for the relief of the Holy Souls; or we can do something for the house of God, for the poor, etc., in this intention. This will be a most acceptable alms in aid of the Suffering Souls, and a consolation for them and us.

146. A soul from Purgatory revealed the following to St. Margaret of Cortona: "Did men but know from what great torments charity towards the poor delivers us, and what great treasure is contained therein, they would give everything they possess to the poor and for pious purposes to gain our prayers." For this reason we often witness that zealous Christians bequeath part or all of their estate to religious institutions, corporations, and for other pious purposes. St. Theresa relates that a benefactor of her convent was delivered from Purgatory on account of his liberality. The Lord said to her: "My daughter, his salvation was in great danger; but he found favor with me in return for the

magnanimous donation he made to you. But his soul will not be released from Purgatory until after the first Mass shall have been celebrated in the new convent." At the communion of this Mass the saint saw the soul of her benefactor gloriously entering heaven.

147. Others are filled with such compassion for the Suffering Souls, that they are not content with praying for them once in a while, but consecrate themselves entirely and unreservedly to God's service for this purpose, either retiring to a convent or devoting themselves to missionary labors. Between 1850 and 1860 a religious congregation of women was founded, called the "Helpers of the Holy Souls." Their object is to pray, suffer and labor for the souls in Purgatory. On rising in the morning their first aspiration is, "My Jesus, mercy!" Thus they gain already at early dawn an indulgence of one hundred days for the Suffering Souls. They repeat this ejaculation every time they make a genuflection before the Blessed Sacrament, and, interiorly, whenever one member meets another. They end all their prayers with the words, "Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord, and let eternal light shine upon them," which ejaculation they repeat on many other occasions. When the clock strikes the hour, they say, "O God, we offer to Thee for the relief of the souls in Purgatory all the acts of love by which the Sacred Heart of Jesus glorified Thee at this hour during His sojourn on earth." Every day they recite the Office of the Dead, and after Mass they sing the *De profundis*. All their religious exercises are offered up for the souls in Purgatory.

Another religious congregation devoted to the interest of the Church militant and the Church suffering

is that of the missionaries of the Most Precious Blood of our Lord, well known in Europe and America. In the United States of North America this Congregation numbers about one thousand members, eighty-five of whom are priests. Its members are divided into three classes—Priests, Lay-brothers and Sisters. In their convents, of which there are about twelve, the Sisters practice the Perpetual Adoration of the Most Precious Blood for the relief of the Suffering Souls. There is no hour of the day when these good religious do not invoke divine mercy. When they meet they salute one another, saying: "Praise be to Jesus Christ!" and apply to the Suffering Souls the indulgence granted for this aspiration. The Sisters receive holy communion every day, except on the day of their confession, and on extraordinary occasions even then. The Brothers of this Congregation receive holy communion four times a week, and on all intervening feasts. The whole community labors and prays for the relief of the Suffering Souls, for the propagation of the faith, for the welfare of the Church and in honor of the Most Precious Blood. Before retiring for the night the members recite for the faithful the psalm *De profundis* together with the prayer of the Church that follows it. During the night they relieve one another from hour to hour in praying before the Blessed Sacrament. Thus do these religious, as well as the members of some other Orders, devote their lives to God for the benefit of the Suffering Souls.

148. To remove a scandal, to repair an injury, to pay debts, in a word to make good whatever the departed souls failed to settle before leaving this world—all of these are most meritorious works by which the

punishment of Purgatory may be softened and abbreviated.—To the Venerable Dominic of Jesus-Mary there appeared the soul of an artist who had to suffer for an immoral picture, until it was destroyed by the agency of Dominic.—The soul of a citizen of Pampeluna appeared to the Venerable Frances of the Blessed Sacrament after being released through her efforts from a debt not yet paid at the time of his death.—The Venerable Servant of God, Brother John de Via, a Franciscan, was admitted to heaven only after his brethren had recited the offices which he had omitted during life.—Pope Benedict XIII. relates that a husband appeared to his wife, thanking her for paying his debts and saying, "May God reward you for your charity. I was in bonds and torments until you paid what I owed."—A curate in Baden had an apparition in which he saw the soul of the parish priest burning in Purgatory; and he was informed that to release the soul from its punishment it would be necessary to satify the obligation of saying thirty-five Masses, for which the priest had received the customary stipend without having had time before his death to say the Masses. The curate said the Masses, and the soul appeared to him no more.

149. In consequence of these and similar apparitions it came to be believed that the souls are detained in Purgatory until restoration is made of their unjust gains, or the scandal given by them is repaired. Regarding this belief it must be remembered that by incurring such a guilt man commits sin, whereby he renders himself liable to punishment. This punishment, to be endured in this world or the next, is proportioned to the guilt incurred. As soon as divine

justice is appeased by means of the punishment endured, the soul is admitted to heaven; there is nothing to debar it. It may be that the goods unjustly acquired have not been restored, or the scandal given has not yet been repaired; but the soul is no longer able to mix in temporal concerns; therefore, the guilt incurred being atoned for, there is no longer any obstacle to its admission to heaven. The time of atonement, however, can be shortened by the vicarious discharge of such liabilities. Hence Benedict XIII. remarks: "It must by no means be inferred that souls, whose debts remain unpaid, will be detained in Purgatory until the debts are paid for them; but only that they are released more speedily by the adjustment of their liabilities through the charity of the living."

§ 30. Offering Holy Communion for the Suffering Souls is Most Beneficial to Them.

150. We read in the Book of Esther that Aman had planned the destruction of the entire Jewish people. Queen Esther bethought herself of a means to placate the king and to save her people. "And on the third day Esther put on her royal apparel and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's hall. Now he sat upon the throne in the hall of the palace, over against the door of the house. And when he saw Esther the queen standing, she pleased his eyes, and he held out toward her the golden scepter which he held in his hand. And she drew near and kissed the top of the scepter. And the king said: What wilt thou, Queen Esther? what is thy request? If thou shouldst even ask one-half of the kingdom, it

shall be given thee. And Esther answered: If I have found favor in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king to give me my life for which I ask, and my people for which I request." (Esth. VII. 3.) She then recounted to the king the danger which threatened her people, the Jews, and implored his help, which was granted at once. The same may be done by every compassionate soul for the souls in Purgatory. When the Christian, with sentiments of profound humility and ardent devotion, approaches the Lord's table, there to renew the divine espousal by receiving Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist—then is his most favorable opportunity to appease His justice and to come to the aid of the Suffering Souls. It is almost impossible that our Lord in holy communion should refuse our petitions for the Sufferers in Purgatory.

151. A pious couple at Straubing, Bavaria, proposed to receive holy communion together on a certain Sunday and to offer it up for the souls in Purgatory. Whilst they were talking over their pious resolve they heard a knock at the door, and a pitiful voice cried out, saying: "Remember me at the banquet." It was a soul from Purgatory who thus begged a share in the spiritual profit of holy communion. St. Gertrude experienced great happiness in being able to release so many souls from Purgatory; but her happiness was at its greatest height on communion days. One day she asked our Lord for the reason. He replied, "It is unseemly that I should refuse your prayer for the souls in Purgatory on those days when you are espoused to Me in communion."

Can you doubt, Christian soul, that the frequent and worthy reception of holy communion is a most

excellent means whereby you can pay off all your own indebtedness, and that thereby you can also most effectually help the Suffering Souls? Take heed, however, to observe that we do not refer merely to frequent communion, but to frequent communion after a good preparation. Beware of deceiving yourself; there is an immense difference between the two.

152. By frequent communion is understood its reception three or four times a week, or even every day, or nearly every day. The receiving of holy communion on all Sundays and feasts of obligation, recommended by the Council of Trent to all the faithful, cannot be called frequent communion when reference is made to priests, religious, seminarians and such as devote themselves zealously to perfection; but regarding those who can devote only a small part of their time to exercises of piety, it is regarded as frequent communion. On the other hand, the custom of receiving holy communion every month, and on all the higher feasts, is not frequent communion. To be Christians, to remain united with God, we must receive holy communion. In this respect the soul is similar to the body. In order to live we must take food, but it is not the food that gives us life; it only nourishes the body, giving it that strength which we possess when we are in health. We eat not because we are strong, but to remain or become so. Now mark well: Holy communion is not a reward for holiness already acquired, but a means for acquiring it. Therefore the Council of Trent expressly declares that "the faithful ought to receive holy communion not only spiritually, but sacramentally, as often as they assist at Mass, in order that they may more abundantly

receive the fruit of this Holy Sacrifice."—How dear to our Savior must those souls become who receive Him often and worthily in holy communion! And how numerous are the favors to be gained thereby for the benefit of the Suffering Souls!

153. In Luxemburg, on the feast of All Saints, the departed Soul of a pious lady appeared to a devout girl to implore her aid. The girl was in the habit of receiving holy communion frequently, and as often as she did so this soul from Purgatory accompanied her. When asked for the reason, the reply was, "Oh, you do not know what a torment it is to be separated from God! It is impossible to describe it. I feel myself drawn irresistibly to God, but I must remain separated from Him in punishment for my sins. This is so painful to me, that I scarcely feel the fire by which I am surrounded. To relieve the intensity of my torments, God permitted me to come to this church to adore Him at least in His house on earth, until I shall be found worthy to possess Him in heaven." She then ardently implored the girl to receive holy communion frequently, and to remember her every time. The girl did so and was privileged after a time to see this soul, resplendent as the sun, entering heaven.

154. When St. John the Baptist, "greater than whom none hath risen among them that are born of woman," was about to baptize the same Divine Savior who is present in the Blessed Sacrament, he trembled and said, "I ought to be baptized by Thee, and comest Thou to me?" (Matth. III. 13.) After the miraculous draught of fishes Peter deemed himself unworthy of the presence of our Lord, and exclaimed, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

(Luke v. 8.) The centurion imploring our Lord to heal his sick servant, said, "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof: but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed." (Matth. VIII. 8.)—And we, poor sinners, should we deem ourselves worthy of receiving in our heart this Supreme Lord of heaven and earth? But though we are infinitely more unworthy than St. John, who dared not touch Him, than St. Peter, who deemed himself unworthy of His presence, than the centurion, who trembled to receive Him under his roof—it is nevertheless our Savior's desire that we should receive Him, and often too, in holy communion. It is entirely within our power to attain that sanctity which He requires for the reception of holy communion: the state of grace, together with the sincere will to avoid sin and to serve God faithfully. "Mortal sin alone," says St. Thomas, "is an obstacle to the reception of holy communion." And Suarez remarks, "It is not taught by a single holy Father that it is necessary to be in the state of perfection in order to receive holy communion worthily and with profit." Most assuredly we must strive to receive our God, the most pure and the most holy, as worthily as possible; and therefore we must prepare ourselves with the utmost zeal and conscientiousness for the reception of this sacrament. Hence St. Bernard observes, "Take notice how prudent the serpent is. Before drinking it relieves itself of all poison. Follow its example: before you come to the fountain of life, that is, before you approach to be nourished with the flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, relieve yourself from all venom of sin, especially of hatred, anger, envy, lust and sinful thoughts."

—Favored souls, after receiving holy communion for the relief of the souls in Purgatory, often beheld these happy spouses of Christ go forth into glory.

155. St. Bonaventure observes: "Let charity and compassion for your neighbors urge you on to approach the sacred table; for nothing is so effectual as holy communion to obtain relief for the Suffering Souls." Our propensity to sin ought not to deter us from partaking of this sacred banquet, which is the true preservative against Purgatory. If we have the misfortune of often falling into sin, let us frequently take the strongest antidote against this deadly venom; that is, let us often approach the holy table to obtain favors for the Suffering Souls. St. Augustine remarks, "You sin daily; then receive holy communion daily." The Suffering Souls are famished with desire for holy communion, and by receiving it for them we can refresh them, as the following example will show.

The Venerable Louis Blosius, this pious and learned writer, relates the following: A servant of God was favored with the apparition of a soul enveloped in flames and suffering great torments for lukewarmness at the reception of holy communion. These soul addressed the servant of God as follows: "I beseech you for the sake of the love we bore to each other, to have the charity to receive holy communion once in my favor; but do it with devout preparation and great fervor. For then I confidently hope to be released from the terrible torments to which I was sentenced because of my tepidity towards the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist." The saintly man complied with this request, and soon after

saw the soul admitted to the beatific vision of the King of glory.

156. According to the doctrine of the Council of Trent holy communion may be received in a two-fold manner; first, sacramentally, by receiving the sacred species in the Holy Eucharist; secondly, spiritually, by exciting in ourselves a true sorrow for our sins, and an ardent desire for holy communion, thus uniting ourselves in a spiritual manner with our Divine Savior.

The holy Fathers say of the exercise of spiritual communion, that if well made, it will benefit our souls almost as much as sacramental communion. Hence we ought to be very solicitous to make the acts of spiritual communion often, particularly:

a) When assisting at Mass at the communion of the priest.—If we are unable to assist at Mass, let us include ourselves at morning prayers in all the Masses of the whole world, and offer them up to God for His honor, at the same time communicating spiritually.

b) When visiting the Blessed Sacrament. Had we been with the shepherds at Bethlehem, knowing that the child in the manger was our Infinite and Almighty God dwelling amongst us in poverty and lowliness, we would have fallen on our knees to adore our Lord and God. The same Redeemer who was laid in the manger is present day and night in the Blessed Sacrament enclosed in the tabernacle. Oh, let us not be remiss in visiting Him and receiving Him spiritually: we will thereby enrich ourselves and the Suffering Souls with abundant grace, help and joy.

c) In the evening, before retiring, we ought to examine our conscience, make an act of contrition for

our sins, and again excite in us the desire of receiving our Lord, recommending to His mercy the Suffering Souls.

157. God Himself deigned to indicate to pious souls how pleasing the practice of spiritual communion is to Him. Appearing to the Venerable Joanna of the Cross, our Lord said to her, that as often as she made the act of spiritual communion, He favored her with grace similar to that she received in sacramental communion.—Blessed Angela was wont to say, "I could not have borne the trials of life if my confessor had not instructed me concerning spiritual communion." She made the act of spiritual communion one hundred times every day.—Once, when St. Raymond celebrated Mass, and had proceeded as far as the communion, St. Catherine of Siena, who was present, felt an ardent desire of receiving the Holy Eucharist. And behold! when St. Raymond broke the sacred host into three parts, the small particle, which the rubrics direct to be placed into the chalice, all of a sudden vanished to the great consternation of the holy man. He diligently sought for it, and not finding it, he was overcome with a great fear of having offended God. St. Catherine observing this informed him that she had miraculously received the missing particle in response to her ardent desire of receiving our Lord.—A pious religious, who on account of illness was not permitted to receive holy communion, begged so persistently that the Blessed Sacrament, enveloped in the *corporale*, might be placed on his breast, that it was finally done. This ardent desire so pleased our Lord, that He permitted the sacred host to penetrate to his heart, and the good religious thus received sacramental communion in a miraculous manner.

Considering all this, should you not, Christian soul, often approach the holy table to receive worthily the flesh and blood of our Lord? or at least should you not often make the acts of spiritual communion? This is the will of God, the desire of the Church. By so doing you will greatly benefit your own soul and bring consolation to the Sufferers in Purgatory.

§ 31. The State of Grace is Necessary to Make Good Works Profitable to the Suffering Souls.

158. What is necessary on the part of the Suffering Souls to obtain the effects of our suffrages?—The answer is easy. They are confirmed in grace and sanctity, and are at the same time united with the faithful on earth in faith and charity. As they still have to suffer temporal punishment which they can not mitigate or shorten by their own merits, they stand in need of the atoning works of the faithful on earth. If they receive no help from them, they must continue to suffer till the last farthing is paid. The disposition they showed during their life in this world exerts great influence on God in permitting them to experience the relief of vicarious atonement. Want of compassion and hardness of heart displease God. He punishes the Suffering Souls for this by depriving them of the works of atonement—the prayers, good works and Holy Masses—offered up for them by their brethren on earth. Thus teaches the learned Cajetan, and with him agree Thomas a Kempis, Hugh of St. Victor and other divines.—On the other hand, those Christians who mercifully and compassionately come to the relief of these suffering, yet most worthy souls, by perform-

ing for their benefit all kinds of good works, may rest assured that God is supremely pleased therewith; and He will permit such souls in their turn, when in Purgatory, to receive speedily the benefit of the good works performed for them by the members of the Church militant. This we know from many private revelations. Sister Frances of the Blessed Sacrament was often visited by souls bringing tidings of others that were not permitted to appear to her. One day a deceased Sister asked her prayers for four others who were not permitted to leave Purgatory.—Another soul, in 1870, even refused to answer questions concerning certain deceased persons, because God did not permit it.

159. On the part of the faithful the following conditions must be observed in order that their suffrages for the Suffering Souls may be accepted by God:

a) They must have the intention of resigning the merits of their good works in favor of the Suffering Souls. The fruit accruing from our good works remains our property as long as we do not cede it to some other person. Our intention may specify a particular soul to whom we desire to apply our suffrages. If the soul for which we supplicate is already in heaven or in hell, God will give the benefit of our intercession to some other soul according to the pleasure of His wisdom, mercy and justice. If the works of suffrage are offered for the relief of the Suffering Souls in general, the satisfactory fruit thereof is divided among them all.

b) The work performed must be one of atonement. All good works are such; but they are not all equally valuable as atonement. Their atoning value

depends either on the disposition of the person performing them; or it may be inherent in the works themselves, as for instance Holy Mass, indulgences and the prayers of the Church.

c) According to the unanimous doctrine of all theologians, the good works, to be effective, must be performed in the state of grace. Nevertheless there is no doubt that the atoning effect of such good works as possess atoning power of themselves, are of benefit to the Suffering Souls even though they be performed in the state of sin; such works are for instance Holy Mass, the personal or local plenary indulgence of a privileged altar, the prayers and blessings of the Church.

The Suffering Souls receive no benefit of a good work performed in the state of sin, when the value of this work requires it to be performed in the state of grace. If in such a case the petition of a sinner is granted, this is not done because the work itself was worthy the favor, but solely and purely as a result of God's mercy. But if the sinner acts as the minister of the Church, or in the name of one actually in the state of grace, then the good work has the same value that it would have if the one ordering it had done the work himself. Thus teaches the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas.

160. St. Chrysostom reminds us: "Of what benefit is your excessive weeping? Not tears, but good works aid the deceased." Charity is inventive; and, Christian soul, the true follower of Christ is all charity. Mindful of the departed, he therefore says, "I will make good the deficiencies of the Suffering Souls." But sometimes our excessive love for the deceased prevents us from using the right means at the proper

time. We do not reflect on the condition of our own soul, we do not examine our state of conscience before God, but are only concerned at the sufferings of our brethren and friends. We perform our good works too hastily, without first offering to God an humble and contrite heart; and thereby we expose them to the danger of being rejected. God will not despise an humble and contrite heart. In the holy sacraments He has provided us with the means of acquiring such a disposition of heart. True contrition and the firm resolution of making use of this means will place us in a condition to render our good works and prayers acceptable to God. And if we receive the sacraments in this spirit, Jesus Himself will be our intercessor with His Heavenly Father. Hence the word of the elder Tobias are applicable also to us, "Lay out thy bread and thy wine upon the burial of a just man, and do not eat and drink thereof with the wicked." (Tob. IV. 18.)

161. A dying father entreated his son to remember him frequently after death. The son did so, praying often and performing many other good works for him. But after thirty-three years his father appeared to him surrounded by flames and complained bitterly that he had neglected for so long a time to come to his relief. "Is it possible," inquired the son in great consternation, "that all my prayers, alms, etc., have availed nothing for your relief?"—"Know, my son," replied his father, "that all the good works you have hitherto performed were fruitless both for you and me, because you performed them in the state of mortal sin. Your confessions were null and void, because you had no true contrition for your sins. Our Lord in His mercy pemitted me to inform you of this for

your own benefit and mine." The son was converted, made a sincere and contrite confession, and was soon informed of the release of his father.—"A contrite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." (Ps. L. 19.) "God resisteth the proud, but to the humble He giveth grace." (I. Pet. v. 5.)

§ 32. The Holy Sacrifice of Mass is the Most Powerful Means of Aiding the Suffering Souls.

162. The Holy Sacrifice of Mass has always been considered by the Church to be the most effective means of releasing the souls of the faithful departed from their torments. "Although we are sinners," says St. Cyrillus, "we nevertheless send up our supplications to God for the departed, not offering Him for instance a crown, but Jesus Christ Himself, who bled for our sins, and beseeching the bountiful and gracious God to be merciful to them and to us. We pray for all that have departed this life, because we confidently believe that the prayer at the altar will be most profitable to them."—Although Holy Mass is the most powerful sacrifice of propitiation, it is to be feared that it is not sufficiently appreciated by the faithful. The truth of this remark is evidenced by the negligence of so many in frequently and devoutly assisting at Mass, and by the deplorable fact that so many Catholics are remiss in having Masses celebrated for their deceased. A great many count those hours that they spend in assisting at Mass as lost and unprofitable. Others excuse themselves with the want of means, saying they cannot afford to give the customary stipend for a Mass. If they would but reflect

on the real essence of the Most Holy Sacrifice and on the futility of their excuses, they would soon be convinced how grossly they deceive themselves.

163. Death has entered our home and claimed a victim. A beloved father, a dear mother, an obedient son, a dutiful daughter, a near relative, a dear friend has departed this life after an illness of days, weeks, months or years. During this time we did our utmost to afford them every relief in our power. But now, after they have departed this life, now, when they are suffering the indescribable torments of Purgatory, we scarcely find time to pray for the repose of their souls. To spend a short time in the morning assisting at Mass for their benefit and to appeal to heaven for their relief and ransom, for our own benefit and the greater glory of God —for this we have no time!—Our dear ones are scarcely out of sight, and already we begin to forget them. We have time to speculate and labor for our advancement in this world, to promote our welware, to add to our wealth, to enjoy pleasures of every kind—but the souls of our departed dear ones are forgotten for the very reason, because amid all these engagements we find no time to remember them in prayer and in the Holy Sacrifice.—No time for prayer? No time to show yourself a Christian? No time to assist at the august Sacrifice of Holy Mass?!—And yet there is no service of the Church more pleasing to our Divine Lord, no act more profitable to us and the Suffering Souls, than Holy Mass. All works of piety and charity are profitable to us and valuable in the sight of God; nevertheless they are human acts, and therefore full of imperfections. Holy Mass however is not a human act, but a Divine Sacrifice offered by

the great Highpriest Jesus Christ Himself to the Most Holy and Adorable Trinity. This Holy Sacrifice is the most efficient means of procuring the speedy release of the departed souls; and we, who claim to be Christians, have no time to assist at it!

164. Livius relates that in the year 360 before Christ an immense abyss opened in Rome. Venomous vapors ascended from it and soon caused a great mortality, so that the city was threatened with destruction. To save it a young patrician offered himself in sacrifice. He bestrode his richly caparizoned steed and plunged into the mysterious depth which immediately closed over him.—A heathen sacrifices his life for his fellow-citizens—and Christians do not even find time to devote a half hour to the relief of their suffering brethren!—When St. Louis, king of France, was informed that some of his courtiers murmured because he spent so much time in assisting at Mass, he rejoined: "If I should devote double the time to play and amusements, nobody would say a word."—Christian soul, can you not devote as much time to Holy Mass as you do to play and amusements? Do not excuse yourself with want of time. Blessed Thomas More, Lord Chancellor of England, was overburdened with work, and yet he served at Mass every morning before entering on the duties of the day.—Our Lord promised to St. Gertrude, "At the hour of death I will send to everyone so many saints to console and assist him, as he devoutly heard Holy Masses during his life."—And we dare to call it unprofitable to assist at Holy Mass? We have no time for this Divine Sacrifice? Rather let us say we have no true conception of our holy religion, no compassion for the dead.

165. It is then greatly to be feared, that Holy Mass is not duly appreciated by a large number of the faithful, despite its being the most precious treasure in the world; and as a consequence this Holy Sacrifice is not offered up in suffrage for the departed as frequently as it should be. It is greatly to be deplored that this treasure, by which we are able to quench the flames of Purgatory, is so to say hidden in the earth for many, and appreciated only by a few. Seemingly, poverty is the reason that so few Masses are offered for the faithful departed; but this excuse in many cases is a very flimsy one, for experience proves that it is not consonant with truth. Many of those who show great zeal in having Masses celebrated for the faithful departed are less blessed with the goods of this world, than many that neglect to do so. Many also, who excuse themselves with poverty, spend more for useless, if not sinful extravagancies, than would be sufficient to have a Mass said often during the year. This is particularly the case at funerals, when a great sum is spent for vain display, whilst the soul of the departed is forgotten, and even the ministers of the Church whose services were engaged are defrauded under pretense of poverty.

166. Another reason why so few Masses are ordered for the deliverance of the faithful departed is to be found in the silence observed on this subject in sermons. It is not our affair, nor do we intend to criticize the action of zealous pastors. They well know that the world has little intelligence for things divine, and therefore accuses the ministers of God of selfishness when they refer zealously and frequently to the subject of having Masses celebrated for the

dead. It is an old practice of the enemies of the Church to call the alms fixed by ecclesiastical law as a condition for gaining an indulgence a barter; and they do the same with regard to the stipend fixed for the celebration of a Mass according to one's intention. To govern her actions the Church was never yet in need of the enemy's counsel. As early as in the apostolic age she condemned the barter of things spiritual for things temporal. "Keep thy money to thyself to perish with thee," said St. Peter to Simon Magus; and he gives the reason for this severe reproof in the following words, "For thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money." (Acts VIII. 20.) The Church at all times condemned the practice of degrading her spiritual ministrations by even the semblance of venality. True, she permits her ministers to receive a fixed stipend for their spiritual ministrations; but at the same time she enjoins it on them most rigorously to abstain from all appearance of striving after worldly gain. The Council of Trent, renewing the former strict laws in this regard, ordains the following: "With regard to avarice, let the bishops forbid entirely every species of contract and stipulation concerning the obligation of Masses; also importunate and unseemly claims or rather exactions of alms and the like, savoring of the pest of simony or of sordid gain."

167. The strict injunctions of the Church, and the prejudices of a great number of the faithful, cause many zealous priests to observe silence concerning the obligation of having Masses celebrated for the deceased. They wish to avoid even the semblance of seeking their own profit, and therefore omit entirely

the instructions that ought to be given on this important duty; for they speak of it but seldom or only in a general way. Praiseworthy as this may be in itself, it is a source of great spiritual damage to the faithful, living and dead. Hence zealous pastors do themselves, what they hesitate to recommend to their parishioners. They offer up for the faithful departed all the Masses not ordered for a particular intention. In 1869 a young priest accompanied his bishop to Rome. In a conversation the latter asked him whether in his daily Mass he also remembered the faithful departed in general and his friends in particular. The priest replied, "Certainly I remember my departed friends very often." The saintly bishop continued, "I did the same when I was a young priest. Once I fell sick and became so dangerously ill, that my life was despaired of. I received the sacraments of the dying; and whilst preparing for death, I reviewed my whole life with all its faults of commision and omission. I became aware how much I had still to atone for, and pondered how few Masses and prayers would be said for me after death. Since my recovery I have made it a practice to be very assiduous in saying Masses for the Suffering Souls; and I rejoice every time I am able to do so."—Christian soul, this is the disposition of every zealous priest; but many of them scruple at inviting the faithful to do what they themselves are so anxious to perform.

168. On the one hand a pious priest is most reluctant to exhort his people to anything in which he might seem to strive for his own temporal interest; on the other he is convinced that very many even among the more religiously inclined regard him as

actuated by self-interest, every time he is obliged—and he can not escape the necessity of doing so at least now and then—to mention money matters. It is obvious that the Masses which the faithful are exhorted to have said must be celebrated by a priest, and that he is entitled to the stipend. Hence there are many who imagine and even say that he speaks in his own interest, when he discourses on the benefits accruing to the Suffering Souls from the Holy Sacrifice of Mass. In doing so they make themse ves guilty of a species of sacrilege; they impede the priest in the disharge of his duty as teacher of religion; they deprive the souls in Purgatory of relief and deliverance from their torments, and God of the glory and adoration which He would have received by their more speedy release. And, as a consequence of this want of charity, the pastors speak only in general on prayer for the Suffering Souls, and leave it to their hearers to draw inferences according to the greater or less degree of their piety.

169. Nevertheless there are also very good Christians who regard this matter in the spirit of the Church. In 1885 a newly ordained priest was appointed to the charge of Ph. in the State of Ohio. It was customary in this congregation to take up a collection on All Souls' day for Masses to be celebrated for the faithful departed, and this was usually announced on the preceding Sunday with an appropriate exhortation. The young priest, reluctant to make the announcement, omitted the customary exhortation. A good old lady, fearing that the Suffering Souls would be deprived of the usual suffrages by the action of the priest, went to the sacristy after Mass,

and begged to remind him of the omission. "I think I discern your motive, your reverence," she said. "You did not omit the exhortation from forgetfulness, but feared to scandalize the congregation. Now please do not let this consideration influence you. We know our religion better. A short exhortation will be of great benefit to the Suffering Souls. Therefore do not let your sense of propriety cause you to deprive the faithful departed of a speedy release."—By this incident the priest was taught to regard in future rather the interests of religion than considerations of popular favor.

O poor Suffering Souls! They that loved you in life might easily come to your aid; but they neglect to do so either from want of knowledge or of faith. Poor Sufferers in Purgatory! Your friends lavishly spend money on their mortal bodies, devoting themselves to pleasure and business, and excusing their heartless disregard of you with the flimsy declaration that your position can not be so very distressing, because they always knew you to be righteous during your mortal career. O love devoid of charity, how long and painfully will you permit your dear ones to suffer in Purgatory?

§ 33. Value and Importance of Holy Mass for the Release of the Suffering Souls.

170. In our mortal state we are unable to comprehend the torments of the Suffering Souls; but the time may come when we shall be taught their intensity by our own dreadful experience.—Hitherto we have heard the doctrine of the Church, of the holy

Fathers, and of theologians in general concerning Purgatory; we have seen that many souls had to suffer long for a venial fault, and that even saints did not escape the purifying flames.—The Venerable Catherine Palluzzi continued for a long time to offer up with great solicitude all her good works for the repose of the soul of her deceased father. Finally she thought she might cease her supplications, when our Lord and St. Catherine appeared to her and conducted her to Purgatory, where to her great astonishment she beheld her father in the midst of a fiery lake, imploring her for help. She nearly fainted from compassion, and called on St. Catherine to aid him by her prayers. Then she turned to our Lord Himself, saying, "I beseech Thee to impose my father's debt on me. I am ready to bear whatever Thou wilt impose on me to make atonement in his stead." In consequence of this magnanimous offer her father was released immediately, but she had to undergo great sufferings.

171. We firmly believe that our prayer, and still more the prayer and suffrages of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints bring relief to the Suffering Souls. But what is the prayer of heaven and earth compared with Holy Mass? In prayer a creature intercedes for a creature; in Holy Mass Jesus Christ, eternal God like His Father, makes intercession for us. Speaking of the value of this Holy Sacrifice, St. Alphonsus Liguori says, "As the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ was more than sufficiently powerful to redeem the whole world, so also is one Holy Mass powerful enough to save it." We have recourse to Holy Mass not for the purpose of renewing the redemption of the world, but to procure for the

souls confirmed in grace the treasures of redemption. This august Sacrifice is undoubtedly the most powerful means to release the Holy Souls from their place of torment. This is solemnly declared by the Council of Trent, saying, "The oecumenical Council teaches that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls confined therein are assisted by the suffrages of the faithful, and especially by the Holy Sacrifice of the altar."—St. Thomas Aquinas teaches, "There is no sacrifice by which souls are released from Purgatory, except the Holy Sacrifice of Mass."

172. By Holy Mass sufficient payment is offered to our Heavenly Father to cancel the indebtedness of the departed. Every soul in Purgatory is an elect child of God, confirmed in His grace and love; for every one became reconciled to Him by contrition, confession and penance. But as they have not rendered sufficient satisfaction for all temporal punishments, they must suffer the penalty now. They incurred punishment by small daily offences and faults, and are detained in prison for the purpose of purification. Our Lord warns us to beware of this prison from which we shall not be released until we shall have paid the last farthing. A just judge will scarely release a prisoner who is confined on account of debt merely because he is implored to do so; but if the debt is canceled by vicarious payment, he will free the prisoner. The Suffering Souls, beloved spouses of Christ, writhing in excruciating torments, are unable as yet to attend the wedding-feast already prepared for them, because the infinite justice and holiness of God demand a ransom. In the Holy Sacrifice of Mass our Divine Savior offers Himself in ransom, and hence the holy

Fathers teach that "many souls go forth from Purgatory every time that Mass is celebrated."

173. St. Chrysostom says, "As often as Holy Mass is celebrated, the angels of heaven hasten to open the prison of Purgatory." In this august Sacrifice the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, this infinite treasure of satisfaction, is offered to the Heavenly Father for the living and the dead. The Suffering Souls themselves have repeatedly given testimony of this. Thus we read that in the time of St. Bernard a deceased religious of Clairveaux appeared to his brethren, thanking them for having released him from a long Purgatory. When asked what had brought him the greatest relief in his torments, he pointed to the altars, saying, "Behold, there are the weapons of divine grace by which I was released. There is shown the power of divine mercy—in the saving Sacrifice of the Victim that taketh away the sins of the world."—Convinced of this truth the Venerable Curé d' Ars one day addressed his hearers as follows: "Dear children, you remember the occurrence which I related to you of a saintly priest who prayed for a deceased friend. Very probably God revealed to him that his friend was suffering great torments in Purgatory. Knowing that there is nothing more effective to procure the repose of a soul than the celebration of Holy Mass, he proceeded to do so as soon as possible. Before consecration he took the host into his hands and addressed God with childlike confidence thus: 'Holy and Eternal Father, let us make an exchange. Thou dost hold captive the soul of my friend, and I have the power of changing this bread into the real Body of Thy Divine Son. Now, do Thou release my friend

from Purgatory, and I will make to Thee an offering of Thy Divine Son, with all the merits of His passion and death.' And behold, after consecration, when elevating the sacred host, he saw the soul of his friend surrounded with glory entering heaven."

174. This saintly priest was well aware of the value of Holy Mass, this inestimable treasure of the Church, and acted most wisely in having recourse to this august Sacrifice rather than to other suffrages. St. Lawrence Justiniani observes that one Holy Mass is to be deemed more valuable than all the penitential exercises of the whole world. He says, "Take the scales and place on one balance all the good works, viz. prayer, night-watches, fasting, alms-deeds, mortifications, pilgrimages, etc., and on the other only a single Mass, and you will find that the value of the one cannot be compared with that of the others; for in Holy Mass He is offered in whom dwells bodily the plenitude of divinity, as St. Paul observes, who possesses an immense treasury of merit, and whose intercession is all-powerful." The blood of Abel cried to heaven for vengeance, but the Blood of Christ cries for pardon. We have a type of this in the Old Law, where almost all the sacrifices were offered in blood, as St. Paul says, "For if the blood of goats and oxen, and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled to the cleaning of the flesh, how much more so shall the Blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered Himself unspotted to God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God? And therefore He is the mediator of the New Testament." (Hebr. IX. 13, 14.) And the prophet Zacharias says, "Thou also, by the blood of Thy testament,

hast sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit." (Zach. IX. 11) And in Holy Mass this Blood still releases the prisoners from Purgatory.

175. Blessed Henry Suso made a compact with a brother priest that if one of them would die, the other should for a year say two masses a week for the deceased. When after a few years his friend died, Suso prayed most fervently for him every day, adding fasts and exercises of penance; but it was impossible for him at the time to say the promised Masses. After some days the deceased appeared to him with a sorrowful countenance and reprehended him sharply, saying, "Faithless friend, do you thus keep your promise?" Suso called his attention to the fervent prayer and numerous penitential works which he had offered up for him. The deceased replied, "Your prayer, though pleasing to God, is not powerful enough to release me from my torments." And striking the table before him with his hand, he cried out, "Blood! Blood! Blood is what we Suffering Souls stand in need of! The Blood of Jesus Christ which is offered up for us in Holy Mass is what will deliver us from our torments. If you had said the promised Masses I should already have been released from my fiery prison. It is your fault that I must still burn. Let me have the Masses, the Masses you have promised me!"

176. Christian soul! Let this cry of the Suffering Souls for the Blood of Jesus find a willing ear with you. Hasten to come to their aid by means of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. If we could but see with our mortal eyes how profitable and valuable a ransom Holy Mass is for the Suffering Souls, we would not refuse to have this Adorable Sacrifice offered up for

their relief. But if you are not able to order a Mass for them, you can at least assist at Mass for this intention and influence others to do the same.—Once, when a poor widow complained to a saintly priest that she was unable to have Masses said for her deceased husband, he counselled her as follows: "Then assist at as many Masses as you can, and offer them for the soul of your husband; for he will find relief more speedily by having many Masses heard for him, than by having only a few offered up for the same intention."—This is a great consolation; for though it is more to have a Mass said than to assist at one, it is nevertheless a special comfort for the Suffering Souls if we offer up for them the Masses which we attend, and thus pour out upon them the Sacred Blood of Jesus. St. Jerome remarks on this subject, "The souls in Purgatory, for whom the priest celebrates Mass whilst the faithful offer up their prayers, are free from pain during the time Mass is said for them."

§ 34. Mass is the Renewal of the Sacrifice of the Cross for the Consolation of the Suffering Souls.

177. Holy Mass, celebrated with becoming faith and devotion, is the most sublime sacrifice, and nothing in the world can equal in value this service of God. In the New Testament we have only one sacrifice, namely that sacrifice which was offered by Christ on the cross for our redemption, the fruits of which are transmitted to us in Holy Mass. By His sacrifice on the cross Jesus Christ redeemed all mankind; by it everybody was made capable of participating in the merits of His passion and death, and of receiving the

grace thereby obtained for us. But how is this to be accomplished? To rational beings whose perceptions depend on their senses, an external, visible action is most suited for this purpose; and therefore the Holy Sacrifice of Mass was instituted. In it the bloody Sacrifice of Jesus Christ is renewed in an unbloody manner; in it Jesus Christ sacrifices Himself mysteriously. Whosoever is present at this sacrifice stands as it were beneath the cross of Christ; he is a witness of the sufferings and death of his Redeemer, and has full opportunity to participate in the merits of Jesus, and to offer himself and his whole being for God's greater glory in this world and in the next.

178. Holy Mass is essentially the same Sacrifice as that once offered on the cross. Hence the Council of Trent declares: "In this Divine Sacrifice of the Mass there is contained the same Christ who offered Himself on the cross in a bloody manner, the only difference being that in Mass He offers Himself in an unbloody manner." If we had no other declaration but this it should suffice to remove all doubt. For we must receive as infallibly true whatever the Catholic Church teaches and proposes to our belief, and we are not allowed to contradict it in the least. To prove that Holy Mass is essentially the same Sacrifice as that of the cross, the Church adds the following declaration to the words quoted above: "For it is the same Victim, and the same Minister of sacrifice through the agency of the priest, who once offered the sacrifice on the altar of the cross; only the manner of sacrificing is different."—This Sacrifice is not only a sacrifice of praise, but the Church regards it also as "a sacrifice of Propitiation for the living and the dead." And hence

she has at all times offered it also for the aid and consolation of the souls of the faithful departed.

179. By the sin of our first parents our Heavenly Father was so greatly offended, that the whole human race was sentenced to eternal perdition. The Son of God, knowing that only a victim of infinite merit could reconcile His Father, and moved by compassion for fallen mankind, resolved to offer Him such a victim. And this victim was no other than Himself.—Behold, O Christian soul, the love of your Redeemer! The Son of God offers Himself as a Sacrifice of propitiation to the Eternal Father, and the Father accepts this Sacrifice from the hands of His Son, who "humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross." (Philip. II. 8.) "He was offered because it was His own will." (Isai. LIII. 7.) In order to accomplish this sacrifice, the Son of God became man and died to prove His infinite love for us. He concealed His divinity by taking to Himself a human body, in which He suffered the ignominious death on the cross at the hands of His executioners. God permitted this and Jesus thus willed it for the sake of our redemption. He willed not the sin of those who clamored for His death, but it was His will to die for us on the cross. The sins of His executioners did not in the least detract from the infinite value of the sacrifice of the divine Victim. "He was offered because it was His own will."

180. God might have commissioned His priests to offer this sacrifice, as He commanded Abraham in the Old Law, "Take thy only begotten son Isaac whom thou lovest, and go into the land of vision, and there thou shalt offer him for an holocaust upon one of the

mountains which I will show thee." (Gen. xx. 2.) But He left it to His Divine Son to institute a ministry for the oblation of the unbloody sacrifice, and He did institute it at the Last Supper with the words, "Do this for a commemoration of me." (Luke xxii. 19.) In the Holy Scripture Christ is called "a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech." (Ps. cix. 4.) From this it is evident that Christ, as "a priest forever," is to offer the sacrifice not once, but repeatedly, "forever." Once He was both the Victim and the Minister of the sacrifice on the cross through the instrumentality of His executioners; but forever He is the Victim and the Minister of the sacrifice on the altar through the instrumentality of His priests. And this is done because it is His will that the living and the dead should participate in His merits.

181. To facilitate the offering of this Sacrifice He performed His greatest miracle: He hid both His divinity and humanity under the form of bread and wine, just as He had hidden His divinity by assuming a human body in which to suffer and to die. The first unbloody Sacrifice which Jesus offered in presence of His apostles at the Last Supper was not a mere type of the bloody Sacrifice which He accomplished next day on the cross, but it was the same Sacrifice; it was the same essence of His flesh and blood, of His divinity and humanity, only in a different form, under the appearance of bread and wine; it was the institution of the Sacrifice in the form in which it was to be offered to His Heavenly Father by the ministers of His Church until the end of time.

It is well known that the propitiatory sacrifices of the Old Law were accompanied by repasts. These

were intended to symbolize the participation of the people in the sacrifices offered, and to signify in an impressive manner the reconciliation and renewal of friendship with God effected by means of the sacrifices. Our Divine Lord wished to retain this feature in His Sacrifice on the cross as well as in that of the altar. Hence He Himself partook of the Last Supper with His apostles and expressed His will that they should follow His example; that is, they should permit the faithful to partake of the Sacrifice as they had partaken of it with Him. This He commanded them to do by the significant words; "Do this for a commemoration of me."

182. St. Augustine calls the Holy Sacrifice of Mass "the sacrament of love, the revelation of unity, the bond of most intimate friendship." He remarks, "Christ was slain but once as the Victim of sacrifice, yet He is offered up for the people every day in the sacrament or in Holy Mass." And St. Cyprian declares, "The passion of Christ is the Sacrifice which we offer." Thomas a Kempis says in the "Imitation of Christ," "When saying Mass or assisting at it, this ought to seem to you so great, so new and joyful, as if Christ had just on this very day descended into the virginal womb of Mary to become man."—O high dignity of Catholics, for whose salvation Christ every day renews His incarnation in a spiritual manner! O great love for us poor sinners!

Not only for the living however, but also for the faithful departed does Christ grant His aid in Holy Mass. Though dissenters presume to deny this consoling truth, we are nevertheless assured of it by our infallible Church. Hence St. Chrysostom exclaims, "By no

means do we celebrate the august mysteries of the altar in vain; and not in vain and without fruit are our prayers."

183. Convincing as are the testimonials of the Church, of the Councils and the holy Fathers concerning the doctrine that Holy Mass is the renewal of the Sacrifice of the cross on the altars of the New Law, our Divine Savior does not confine Himself to their authority, but confirms this truth again and again by miracles. For our Savior is not compelled to retain the form in which it is His will to appear in Holy Mass. It sometimes happens that He lays aside the form of bread and appears in the form of a child, of a man, or of blood, in order thereby to confirm or propogate the true faith by a new miracle.—For the twelfth time during Lent had Charlemagne advanced with his army against the Saxons to conquer them and have them converted to the Christian faith. When Easter approached, he commanded his entire army to prepare with due devotion for the reception of the sacraments on that feast. In order to witness the Christian service, Wittekind, duke of Saxony, disguised himself as a beggar and secretly entered the enemy's camp. He assisted at Mass, and was greatly impressed by the devotion of the Christian soldiers. He paid close attention to the celebrant, to whom all eyes were directed. At the consecration he saw to his great astonishment a most beautiful little child in the hands of the priest; and at the same moment he felt his heart moved by a joy never experienced before. He now kept his eyes on the priest; and he saw that at holy communion the priest presented such a child to every communicant. To his further astonishment he beheld

the child coming to some with all the indications of joy, to others with great reluctance. Later he related his experience to Charlemagne and asked for an explanation. On receiving it he was so affected that he asked for baptism; and he took some priests with him to Saxony to convert the country.

184. A celebrated historian, a Benedictine of Monte Cassino, relates a remarkable occurrance in the life of St. Gregory the Great. A noble Roman matron had from devotion taken upon herself the task of preparing the altar breads and of bringing them to Church on Sundays. Once, when approaching with others to receive holy communion from the hands of the pope, she began to laugh just as he was about to give her the consecrated host with the words, "May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto life everlasting." The holy pontiff withdrew the sacred particle and placed it aside on the altar, where he stationed a deacon to guard it. After Mass the pope questioned the matron about her unseemly behavior. She replied that she had laughed because the pope had called the altar bread which she had baked herself the body of our Lord. The pope informed the assembled congregation of it, and exhorted the people to prayer. All present fell on their knees with him; and when he arose after some time and spread out the *corporale* in which the consecrated particle had been folded, his fingers were stained with blood miraculously exuding from it. The whole congregation thronged about him to view the miracle. Prayer was then resumed, and the sacred host resumed its former appearance.

185. Now if God, for the sake of this mysterious Sacrifice, lifted the veil of unbelief from the souls of

Wittekind and the Roman matron in so miraculous a manner, how much the more may we hope that He will disrupt the bonds of the Suffering Souls whom He loves so dearly! For we have already learned that this Holy Sacrifice is offered up not only for the living, but also for the dead. Who is able to describe how the Suffering Souls yearn for this Holy Sacrifice? —St. Bernard relates that St. Malachy, archbishop of Armagh in Ireland, had celebrated Mass for a long time for his deceased sister. Finally he ceased to do so. After thirty days he one night heard his sister's mournful voice telling him that she had waited for thirty days in the vestibule of the church for his help, but had received none. Then she appeared to him at the church door clothed in mourning. When he celebrated Mass for her again, he saw her inside the church, but still wearing a dark dress. He continued to offer the Holy Sacrifice for her every day until he saw her going to heaven in great splendor in company with a great number of other released souls.

§ 35. Holy Mass is Essentially a Propitiatory Sacrifice for the Faithful Departed.

186. Christian artists have illustrated very beautifully an idea of the holy Fathers, representing the angels as gathering in golden vases the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ during its presence on the altar, and pouring it as a refreshing dew into the flames of Purgatory. By the power of this Blood numbers of souls are purified and then soar up into the realms of eternal bliss.—By His Precious Blood our Savior restored the honor of His Heavenly Father and brought

redemption and salvation to mankind. In virtue of His divinity it was of infinite value and atoned for our guilt, immense as it was. The bond of charity, sanctified in this Blood, now binds us more intimately to God than before. The souls in Purgatory are souls ransomed and purified in the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ and bearing the indelible mark of His grace, souls for whom the Supreme Judge has already prepared the immortal crown of victory. The whole mystic body of Christ, the Catholic Church in all her three branches, is quickened and penetrated, sanctified and kept united with God by the all-pervading, supernatural power of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. This Blood is still being shed every moment on the altars of the New Dispensation ; it is still being offered in Holy Mass for the benefit of both the living and the dead. Who, then, can doubt that the Suffering Souls in Purgatory receive consolation from this sacred oblation?

187. The Holy Sacrifice of Mass is a propitiation and atonement, in virtue of its very nature and by the ordinance of Christ. The Council of Trent teaches: "The Sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacrifice of the Cross are one and the same Sacrifice, because in both the Minister offering and the Victim offered are the same; the manner of offering alone is different. Hence it is justly offered, according to the tradition of the apostles, not only for the sins, punishments, atonements and other needs of the living, but also for the departed in Christ who are not yet entirely purified." —In Holy Mass we celebrate the work of our redemption: The Sacrifice of the Mass is in truth the unbloody renewal of the death of Christ ; it is the repre-

sentation and continuance of His Sacrifice on the cross. The object of this Sacrifice therefore is to make us individually partakers of the various effects of the sacrificial death of Christ. This being its object, it must of necessity also make us sharers of the sin-destroying power of Christ's death; that is, it must make us partakers of the atonement rendered for us by our Savior's death on the cross. In other words, the Sacrifice of the Mass must be a Sacrifice of Propitiation. The Holy Scripture frequently mentions, as being effects of the sacrificial death of Christ, the blotting out of sin, release from the curse of sin, destruction of its bondage, and reconciliation with God. Moreover our Lord solemnly declared at the institution of Holy Mass, that His Body would be given and His Blood shed "unto the remission of sins." (Matth. XXVI. 28.)

188. Concerning the sublimity of Holy Mass, St. Alphonsus Liguori says: "The work of our redemption is renewed in every Mass; and this is done so effectually, that if Jesus had never died on the cross, the celebration of one Mass would have procured for the world the same benefits that were realized by the death of Jesus on the cross." St. Augustine declares that we are not allowed to entertain the least doubt concerning the aid given by the prayer of the Church and the Holy Sacrifice; and then he adds these words: "This ordinance has been delivered to us by the Fathers, and it is observed to-day in the whole Church —that this Sacrifice be offered up for all those who have died in the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, and whose souls are remembered during the oblation."—St. Monica's only wish at her death, her

only prayer was, that her sons might remember her at the Lord's altar. St. Augustine relates that prayers were said and the Holy Sacrifice was offered for her after her death. St. Cyrillus of Jerusalem calls Holy Mass a Sacrifice of Propitiation, and adds, "For the departed, even though they be sinners, (that is, even though they have died in venial sin), we offer our prayers to God. And not only our prayers do we offer for them, but we do infinitely more: we offer up Christ, the Victim for our sins, thereby to obtain from the God of mercy propitiation for ourselves and for them."

189. This propitiatory effect is inherent in the Sacrifice of the Mass itself; that is, it is produced in virtue of its celebration, without regard to the spiritual state of the celebrating priest, be he saint or sinner. If they, for whose benefit Mass is celebrated, are well disposed and capable of receiving its effects, they are sure of obtaining the fruit of atonement and release of punishment; and this is true, according to the doctrine of theologians, as regards both the living and the dead. Hence, to share in the effects of Holy Mass, the state of grace is necessary. For as long as a person is in the state of mortal sin and an enemy of God, he is not capable of receiving even the least remission of punishment. But the Suffering Souls are always in the highest degree capable of receiving the atoning effects of this Holy Sacrifice; for they are elect children of God, possessing an inalienable right to heaven; they are just and holy souls, loving nothing besides God, and are consumed by a most agonizing thirst to be admitted to His beatific vision. God's

wisdom, justice and mercy ordain to what degree their sufferings shall be diminished or abbreviated.

190. As a Sacrifice of Propitiation Holy Mass therefore has the power, and by the ordinance of Christ it is its object, infallibly and directly and in virtue of its own efficacy to efface temporal punishment of sin. That this effect does not detract from the value of the sacrifice of the cross, but that its infinite power and efficacy is rather emphasized thereby, is obvious to everyone having a true comprehension of Catholic doctrine. The Church does not teach that by the sacrifice of Christ on the altar the treasure of redemption merited by His sacrifice on the cross is increased or receives new value, but that the unincreasable and inexhaustible price of redemption paid for us through the sacrifice of the cross is individually applied to us and made our own in Holy Mass. Christ's treasury of grace ever remains the same; but this grace is distributed and applied to the souls of men in Holy Mass. And this will continue as long as there are souls, here and in the next world, capable and in need of salvation. Consequently the fruits of the Holy Sacrifice of Mass are in general the very same as those acquired by our Lord on the noble tree of the cross. What was merited on the cross for all mankind is intended to be made the property of the individual in Holy Mass; it is therefore a continual Sacrifice of Propitiation.

191. The Sacrifice of Mass possesses an infinite efficacy which can neither be increased nor diminished by man, because Jesus Christ is at the same time the Minister and the Victim of the Sacrifice. For this

reason it is a means of obtaining from God the most sublime gifts, in general and in particular. If Mass is celebrated for the Suffering Souls, there is no doubt that one Holy Sacrifice possesses of itself more power than is necessary to release at once all souls detained in Purgatory, as the Council of Trent teaches: "The fruits of the bloody sacrifice on the cross are distributed and received most profusely through the unbloody Sacrifice of the Mass."

Can we be astonished, when reflecting on the propitiatory powers of Holy Mass, that by it many souls are delivered at once from Purgatory? St. Nicholas of Tolentino saw a great number of Suffering Souls in a field, who all united in imploring him to celebrate Holy Mass for them. After having done so for eight days, it was revealed to him that the souls he had seen were all released. — St. Anthony of Padua relates: Blessed John of Alverina once offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on All Saints' Day. At the consecratisn, while holding the sacred Body of our Lord in his hands, he ardently implored the Heavenly Father, by the Blood and the merits of His only Son, to release the Souls from Purgatory; and behold! he saw a great number of these holy souls, like sparks of fire escaping from a furnace, soaring up triumphantly to the heavenly kingdom.

§ 36. Application of the Fruits of Holy Mass to the Suffering Souls in Purgatory.

192. By His passion and death on the cross our Savior redeemed us from sin; and when He ascended into heaven, He left us the whole treasure of His merits and all the graces He had acquired for us. But

these merits and graces must be applied to the individual souls of men, if they are to be saved by Christ's redemption. To make this application of our Savior's merits and graces is the office of the Holy Ghost. It is the Holy Ghost who communicates to every individual soul, till the end of the world, the merits of Christ's passion and death, thereby rendering it susceptible and worthy of the redemption. Before His death our Lord therefore said to His apostles: "It is expedient for you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you." (John xvi. 7.) To redeem us, to regain for us the grace lost by our first parents, to open for us once more the gates of heaven—to procure for us all these blessings, our Savior had to die but once. After this one sacrifice on the cross He could return to His Father who had sent Him. But not so the Holy Ghost. His work of sanctification is not completed by one single act; it must and will be carried on continually till the end of time. One generation after another appears in this world; and of all these human beings there is not one born without the blight of original sin on the soul, not one who is free from the evil consequences of this sin. All these souls must share in Christ's redemption by having His merits and graces applied to them, if they are to attain eternal salvation. Now it is the Holy Ghost who must render every one of these souls capable of participating in the merits and graces of the redemption; that is, He must sanctify every individual soul to make its salvation possible. The Holy Ghost is therefore called the Paraclete, that is, the Consoler; and this He is in a special manner for the Suffering

Souls who, being sanctified, languish to enter their heavenly abode.

193. The Most Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is the means by which the Holy Ghost applies to us the graces of the redemption. In the sacraments, that seven-fold stream of grace, the Precious Blood enlivens the Church, the mystical body of our Lord. Hence the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, that Blood which was shed on the cross, and which is shed mysteriously in every Holy Mass, is the abode and treasury of the Holy Ghost. Among all the dispensations of grace for the direct sanctification of man, Holy Mass holds the first and most important place in consequence of its relation to the sacrifice of the cross. The sacrifice of the cross is the fountain-head of all grace, the general source of all spiritual aid; for in the sacrifice of the cross all blessings of redemption have their origin, and from it all means of grace receive their power and efficacy. Now in Holy Mass this inexhaustible fountain of grace and salvation flowing from the sacrifice of the cross is transferred from the past to the present, from a distance into our immediate presence. For this reason and from this view Holy Mass may be called the cherished abode of the Holy Ghost; it may be regarded as the source of the means of grace, namely the sacraments and sacramentals, by which the sanctification of individuals is accomplished. Holy Mass can therefore produce directly, or at least indirectly, all divine graces and blessings, not only for its minister, but also for those for whom it is offered.

194. In its relation to us Holy Mass aims at our sanctification and salvation; hence it is a means of

grace, or rather the source of grace, by which the wealth of divine blessings is transmitted to us. The grace flowing from Holy Mass is due principally to its character as a Sacrifice of Propitiation and Impetration. According to the Council of Trent the propiatory effect of Holy Mass embraces "sins, punishment and atonement." Christ offered Himself on the cross as a Sacrifice of propitiation and impetration for the redemption of the whole world. Before this sacrifice there was no salvation; by it the price of ransom for the whole world was placed in the hands of the Heavenly Father. This reconciliation with God, effected for all mankind, is applied individually to man in Holy Mass. This Sacrifice appeases the just wrath of God, it disarms His avenging hand, and renders sinful man an object of divine favor and mercy. The effect of this propitiatory Sacrifice is to move God to condone, wholly or in part, the punishment incurred by the person assisting at Mass, or for whom it is celebrated. This remission of punishment is gained in virtue of the vicarious satisfaction or payment made to God by Christ; for in Holy Mass the price of atonement and propitiation is continually paid anew to the Heavenly Father, and this for particular persons, that He might avert from them the punishment they have incurred, and favor them with increased mercy. Holy Mass therefore draws down upon man grace to enlighten him, to impel him to turn to God in faith, hope, charity and contrition, and to receive worthily the holy sacraments, by which he is sanctified interiorly and becomes again a child of God. This is expressed by the Council of Trent as follows: "Reconciled by the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of Mass,

our Lord imparts the grace of penance, and remits sins and vices, however great they may be." And in the gospel of St. John we read of the Holy Ghost: "He shall glorify me: because He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it to you." (John xvii. 14.) Accordingly the Holy Ghost imparts the redemption of Jesus Christ individually to man by leading him to share in it.

195. Mortal sin is not blotted out directly and immediately by Holy Mass; and according to the opinion of most theologians, even venial sin cannot thus be effaced. We have seen however that this august Sacrifice effects a disposition by which we are drawn to reconcilation with God; hence we say that it leads us mediately and indirectly to pardon. The guilt of mortal sin is removed from man only by the infusion or restoration of sanctifying grace. This grace of justification, and consequently also the remission of mortal sin, is usually obtained, according to the ordination of God, only in the sacrament of Baptism, or by means of the sacrament of Penance, or by an act of perfect contrition made with the desire of receiving the sacrament of Penance. The sacraments are instituted for the direct justification and sanctification of man, and serve to originate and confirm the supernatural life of the soul. On the other hand sacrifice, as such and in the first place, is a service of God. True, Holy Mass is also a means of salvation, but it was not instituted primarily for the conferring of the grace of justification; hence it is not able of itself and without the help of some other means of grace to blot out and take away sin. And yet Holy Mass, according to the

doctrine of the Church, is undoubtedly a means productive of atonement and remission of sin.

196. Fallen mankind was fully redeemed by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Thereby it was made possible for every human being to be released from guilt; nevertheless every one must individually apply to himself the means instituted for his purification. In Holy Mass the propiatory sacrifice of the cross is renewed in favor of individual persons; but yet every one must for himself offer up his heart to God in contrition and charity. If, despite the graces we receive, we continue in our wicked life and do not abandon sin, we shall die in it; and therefore St. Augustine observes, "God, who created us without our help, will not save us against our will and without our co-operation." This truth is illustrated by the crucifixion of Christ. We know that despite the tears and prayers of Christ on the cross but few of the many thousands of sinners present at His death were converted and said, striking their breasts, "Indeed this man was the Son of God." (Mark xv. 39.) The rest remained obdurate and refused to avail themselves of the grace offered them.

197. Judas was a witness of all the miracles performed by Jesus, he was one of His chosen apostles; and yet, like the malefactor who was crucified at the left of our Savior, he died in his wickedness. The Good Thief, also crucified with Jesus, died repentant and was received into paradise. In like manner the effect produced by Holy Mass is different according to the more or less worthy disposition of the person attending it. The better his disposition, the greater will be his share of the fruit and treasure derived from

this Sacrifice. Hence it is necessary that they who assist at Mass do so in the proper spirit. Without our co-operation we will not experience the effects intended to be conferred by our Divine Savior in this Holy Sacrifice. In a word, the effect depends on the spiritual disposition of the person assisting at Mass, or for whom Mass is offered. Those well disposed receive through this Sacrifice the grace to perceive and to be very sorry for their sins. A renowned spiritual writer says, "Holy Mass does not blot out sin, but excites contrition or a desire for contrition. This contrition is sometimes excited at the very time when Mass is celebrated; at other times it is granted later, yet as a result of this Holy Sacrifice. Thus it happens that many are converted by a special grace of God without being aware that they owe it to the efficacy of Holy Mass. Sometimes sinners are not converted at all, because they refuse the grace of God, or abuse it instead of co-operating with it."

198. What a consolation to know that our brethren deceased in the Lord are capable of receiving the atoning effects of Holy Mass! The Suffering Souls are in need of our help, because they have incurred temporal punishment, which they cannot mitigate or shorten by their own merit. But they are susceptible of our assistance, because they are in a state of grace, and are united with the faithful on earth in faith and charity. While Holy Mass is only an indirect means for the remission of sins, it is a direct means of obtaining remission of punishment, in virtue of the atonement made by Christ on the cross, whose merits are vicariously applied to us. For on Calvary "He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows. He

was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins; the chastisement of our peace was on Him." (Isai. LIII. 4. 5.) For our peace He suffered, averting from us the wrath of God. The merits of His passion and death are applied to us for the remission of our punishment.

199. In the Suffering Souls God illustrates His justice and His mercy. Some theologians hold that the Suffering Souls all share in the fruits and suffrages of Holy Mass to the same degree; but the more prevalent opinion is, that the souls in Purgatory share in the fruits of Holy Mass according to the degree of worthiness they attained or aimed at in life. The defenders of this opinion declare that the disposition of departed souls can well differ; that there are special virtues, for instance a profound reverence for the Church's power of binding and loosing, great penitential zeal, charity for our fellow-men, especially for the Suffering Souls, and particularly a great fervor in assisting at Mass and in receiving holy communion, by which we gain during life a special claim to speedy help after death and to a particularly abundant share of the general and special works of atonement performed by the Church militant. Souls who were insensible during life to the pitiful condition of the souls in Purgatory, will in their turn find no relief while suffering in this prison; they will have to pay their indebtedness to the last farthing, and this even in case prayers and sacrifices are offered especially for them. For the acceptance of these suffrages in behalf of those for whom they are intended depends entirely on the will of the just God; and St. Augustine remarks, "Our suffrages for the deceased are not always dis-

tributed as we intend. Sometimes God makes the distribution quite differently, granting the merits of the good works which we perform for the departed to such of them as have deserved this privilege during life by their own charity for the Suffering Souls. 'For with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again'."

200. As the state of the Suffering Souls always renders them capable of receiving the mercy of God, the Holy Sacrifice offered up for them is never ineffective; but their disposition towards it during life will affect the measure of this mercy. The better we are disposed when assisting at Mass, the greater will be the fruit we derive from it; therefore we must prepare our souls, purifying them by penance, withdrawing ourselves from earthly things, and inflaming our hearts with a desire for heavenly things. The propitiatory effect of Holy Mass is rendered so much more potent for us and for the Suffering Souls, the more earnestly we endeavor by our own efforts to appease the wrath of God. That we may be impelled to make these efforts, let us remember that the justice of God is infinite like His goodness and mercy; let us consider how displeasing to God and how culpable even the least sin and sinful inclination is; let us contemplate the rigorous and enduring punishments of Purgatory: then we will be penetrated with a wholesome fear of God's majesty and a dread of His just and holy judgments. We will gratefully and diligently make use of the gracious hour of the Holy Sacrifice to wash our garments in the Blood of the Divine Lamb; and we will not fail to sprinkle with the same Most Precious Blood the Suffering Souls in Purgatory. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (Matth. v. 7.)

201. Having such a powerful Sacrifice of propitiation, possessing in Holy Mass the key of the treasury of the atoning merits of Jesus Christ—why should we permit the souls in Purgatory to continue to suffer? These souls must either undergo punishment sufficient to pay their indebtedness to divine justice, or the faithful must make vicarious payment by offering atoning merits for them till the last farthing is paid. These atoning merits are found superabundantly in Holy Mass. Segneri says very aptly, "The Sacrifice of the cross is the general source of the remission of sins; the Sacrifice of Holy Mass is a particular source, by which the Holy Ghost directs the efficacy of the Blood of Christ to individual souls. The passion and death of Christ have accumulated the treasury; in Holy Mass this treasury is distributed by the Holy Ghost. The death of Christ is a general treasury; Holy Mass is its key." These are consoling words, addressed to all who are truly conscious of their misery and weakness; they are a strong plea in favor of assisting diligently and devoutly at Mass. For when you assist at Mass, Christian soul, Christ gives you the key to His superabundant treasury; He permits you to open it, and to take away as much as your devout disposition enables you to receive. This treasure you can then devote to the relief of your dear ones in Purgatory.

Segneri continues, "Remark well, therefore, what is meant by celebrating Mass or assisting at it. It means that Holy Mass causes God, who is the God of all, to die again for me and for you all while assisting at the august Sacrifice, and this in such a manner as if He was dying for every one separately."—Thus does the Holy Ghost apply redemption and sanctification indi-

vidually to the living, and to such of the deceased as are not yet sufficiently pure to enter paradise. Thus does the Holy Ghost sanctify souls to make them capable of entering the abode of bliss, but only such souls as are desirous of co-operating with His grace.

202. Catholics in general understand well the doctrine concerning the disposition necessary for obtaining the fruits of the Holy Sacrifice of Mass; hence they strive to become worthy of them by fulfilling well the duties of their state of life, by avoiding sin, by frequenting the sacraments, by offering prayer and alms-deeds, by making novenas, etc. Knowing moreover that the Holy Sacrifice of Mass in virtue of its own efficacy, and prayer and other suffrages offered in the state of grace, never fail in their atonement for the souls in Purgatory, they do their utmost to come to the relief of these Holy Sufferers.

§ 37. The Mass of Requiem.

203. The loving solicitude of the Church for the relief of the Suffering Souls is demonstrated by the ancient ecclesiastical customs which have come down to us. Holy Mass was at all times her foremost means of relief. As observed before in the course of these treatises, the Holy Sacrifice is offered for the living and deceased members of the Church in general, and is also celebrated for certain souls in particular. For this latter purpose the Roman Missal has a special rite or manner of celebrating Mass. St. Thomas Aquinas observes, "The Church, even in very early times, prescribed certain proper Mass formulas for the various occasions on which she prays and offers sacrifice for the souls of the faithful departed, in order that

the priest may make use of these formulas in Masses for the dead when no obstacle intervenes to prevent him from doing so. The objection is futile, that the fruit of the Mass is the same, whether the formula of Mass of the Blessed Virgin, or of the Holy Ghost, or that of *Requiem* be used: for true as it may be that the Holy Sacrifice, as such and in virtue of its own efficacy, obtains the same fruit in such cases; nevertheless the Mass of *Requiem* celebrated for the dead produces—for them—a greater fruit, because in it prayers are added to the Holy Sacrifice which have for their special object the relief and ransom of the faithful departed, for which reason they obtain a special fruit."

204. By prayer we can obtain every grace from our Heavenly Father; but no prayer, however fervent it may be, can obtain from God so sure and speedy a hearing as may be obtained through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. If we remember what has been said hitherto in these pages on the essence and value of Holy Mass, we will easily comprehend why Holy Mass is so effective a Sacrifice of impetration. In the Sacrifice of our altars Christ Himself implores His Heavenly Father with us for the fulness of all blessings. In Holy Mass Christ descends into the midst of His faithful, to unite the voice of His Blood, which cries to heaven more powerfully than the blood of Abel, with the supplication of the Church of God on earth. And if God according to His promise grants us everthing we ask in the name of His dearly beloved Son, why should we not obtain all the gifts of His mercy through this Holy Sacrifice? Christ obtains everything He asks for us; His Will never remains unfulfilled. And when He—our merciful and

faithful Highpriest, our true Paschal Lamb—is mysteriously sacrificed on our altars: must we not believe that then, during those hours of grace, His intercession with God is all-powerful? Hence St. Chrysostom aptly remarks: "The holy angels await the time of Holy Mass to intercede for us during it more effectually; and what we do not obtain during the time of Mass, we will scarcely receive at any other time." St. Alphonsus Liguori says, "Consider that God hears the prayer of the priest more willingly during Holy Mass than at any other time. True, He imparts His grace at all times when asked in the name of and through the merits of Jesus Christ, but during the time of Mass He grants them much more willingly; for then our prayers are sustained and reinforced by the prayer of Jesus Christ, whereby they receive immeasurably greater efficacy, because Jesus Christ is the Highpriest who sacrifices Himself in order to obtain grace for us."

205. Hence the Church not only offers the Sacrifice, but joins various prayers and ceremonies with this offering. Being the Spouse of Christ, the Church is always resplendent with sanctity. Therefore the Sacrifice, attended as it is with so many prayers and supplications, is graciously received from her hands by God and rewarded with abundant blessings. The entire sacrificial rite being performed in the name of the Church, it moves God most effectually to grant His favors to the living and the dead. For this reason the Church usually gives expression to our needs and desires in such a manner that we can easily discern what kind of favors she intends to obtain by Holy Mass, and for whom she intends to obtain them. The rite

of the Mass of *Requiem* is so entirely and so exclusively adapted to the wants of the faithful departed, that prayers for the living are not allowed in it except in the Canon, which remains the same in all Masses. The liturgical prayers for the departed are productive of a special fruit which is added to the fruit essentially contained in the sacrifice; and the whole is granted to the soul for whom the Mass is applied. The essential fruit of Holy Mass, which is inherent in it in virtue of its own efficacy, comes directly and solely from Christ's oblation of Himself, and is therefore entirely independent from the formula of the Mass.

206. According to St. Thomas a clearly expressed sentiment pervades the Masses of *Requiem*, which also indicates the grace obtained thereby; and these Masses enjoy greater privileges than other votive Masses. The fundamental sentiment of *Requiem* Masses, in which all their peculiarities are embodied, is the ardent yearning of the Church to devote all her prayers and the full fruit of the Holy Sacrifice to the release of the Suffering Souls. Our affectionate Mother the Church makes intercession for her departed children: will God, our Father, repulse her whom He Himself gave us for our Mother through His Divine Son? This loving Mother imitates the example of our Divine Savior, who clothed the holy sacraments in visible signs for the purpose of letting us share in the graces of redemption. Do we not conduct water and other fluids to their destination by means of pipes? Break the conduit and the current will cease to flow: reject the visible signs of the holy sacraments and the means of grace will be denied to you. The rite of *Requiem* Masses is a form established by the Church

to draw the grace of heaven down upon the souls in Purgatory. If the formula of *Requiem* Mass is not used, the value of the Sacrifice will by no means suffer diminution; but the fruit of the Church's supplication will be wanting.

207. This being the chief sentiment of *Requiem* Masses, both priest and people join in them by praying in the name of the Church. In this supplication lies the special fruit of these Masses. Their whole rite is adapted to the end that this supplication may be made from the depth of the heart, so that the Suffering Souls may receive increased consolation also from the charity of the priest and of the faithful. Hence in *Requiem* Masses everything is omitted by which the benefits personally gained by those who assist at the Sacrifice are indicated: the water to be mixed with the wine is not blessed, nor is the blessing given to the people; deacon and subdeacon also receive no blessing. At the Introit the celebrant does not sign himself with the cross, and incense is used only at the Offertory. At the Gospel neither incense nor lighted candles are used; the kissing of the book and the kiss of peace are omitted, also the prayer preceding the latter. At the *Agnus Dei* the Church supplicates for peace in the name of the deceased, for eternal peace. The psalm *Judica*, in which no reference is made to the departed, is omitted, as is also the *Gloria Patri.* But the Church gives full vent to her mourning and supplication in the touching strophes of the *Dies irae.* The *Requiem aeternam*, etc., and the Offertory are always recited in the plural number, to indicate that the souls of all the faithful departed share in the general fruits of the Holy Sacrifice, although its special

fruits are reserved for the souls for whom it is offered in particular.

Christian soul! Cultivate a great esteem for these rites of the Church in the firm conviction that in all her beautiful ceremonies she is led by supernatural motives.

§ 38. High Mass of Requiem.

208. When the Holy Sacrifice is celebrated in the form of a High Mass, the fruit which comes to it by the prayers of the Church is increased. For the greater the solemnity with which the Church celebrates Holy Mass for the glory of God, the more pleasing to God and the more efficient is her prayer. Therefore she calls a greater number of persons to aid in the celebration of the sacred mystery, and invites all nature to implore God for the relief of the Suffering Souls. The three children in the fiery furnace (Daniel III.) invited all creatures, water, fire, heat, cold, light and darkness, hills and valleys, seas and rivers, etc., to bless the Lord. The soul of man honors God by sentiments of faith, hope, charity, humility, gratitude, submission, etc.; and it is the office of the body to express these sentiments by its attitudes, because the human body is the king of material creation formed by the Almighty's own hand. "And God created man to His own image." (Gen. I. 27.) In man's body all material creation, so to say, does homage to God. This the Church acknowledges to the fullest extent. Hence she first sanctifies all nature, and then employs it for her purposes. At a solemn Mass the external accessories are of much greater splendor than at a private Mass.

209. At solemn High Mass the Church employs a greater number of ministering officials: deacon, subdeacon, acolytes; she employs more precious vestments and sacred vessels; the number of lighted candles is greater; there are incensations, singing and ringing of bells. All these accessories are for the greater glory of God, and to increase the devotion of the faithful. Hence the Church accords special privileges to the solemn High Mass of *Requiem*, so that it can be celebrated every day except on Sundays and higher feasts.—How wise and compassionate is Holy Mother Church! Imitating our Divine Savior she makes animate and inanimate creation serve her purposes. Jesus Christ sanctifies water in the name of the Tri-une God thereby to make us heirs of heaven; He makes use of bread, wine, oil, etc., in the holy sacraments to confer on us the graces of salvation. In the same manner Holy Church blesses and uses water, salt, incense, vestments, bells, etc., to make us share in the treasury of grace entrusted to her by Christ. Whosoever regards Christ as his Redeemer must needs have a firm faith in His infallible Church and cherish all her ordinances. Hence St. Cyprian aptly says, "Whosoever has not the Church for his Mother cannot have God for his Father."—How sacred then must be the rites which the Church employs in the celebration of the august Sacrifice for the Suffering Souls, who were her faithful children on earth!

210. Christ delivered Himself substantially to His Church, not only to be her Oblation, but also that she might be able to offer herself in and with this Oblation of infinite value. She does this by living the whole life of Jesus Christ, in intimate union with this Obla-

tion, through the entire course of every year. Guided by the Holy Ghost, she is intent on giving due expression to her faith by this Oblation as well as by her whole cult; and therefore she watches jealously over its purity. Hence the more solemn the ecclesiatical service, the more valuable and effective is the Sacrifice. This is demonstrated by the learned Pasqualigo. He answers the question whether a solemn and a private Mass are of the same value with reference to the Suffering Souls as follows:

"It must be admitted, *first*, that a solemn Mass in its character as a Sacrifice of impetration is more effective than a private one for the person for whom the Sacrifice is offered—offered as it is by the Church.

"It must be admitted, *secondly*, that a solemn Mass, offered by the Church as a Sacrifice of atonement for any individual, is more effective than a private Mass.

"It must be admitted, *thirdly*, that the Sacrifice solemnly offered is more effective than a private Mass in virtue of its own efficacy, as also in its character of a Sacrifice of propitiation, atonement and impetration."

In explanation of the last observation Pasqualigo adds that since Christ has left the Sacrifice to the Church for the purpose of applying the fruits of His passion to the souls of men, its solemn oblation must in equity be productive of more abundant fruits.

211. Hence the greater the solemnity with which Holy Mass is celebrated, the more enhanced the majesty of the august Sacrifice becomes; and the greater is also the glory it gives to God, the more abundant are its blessings for the Church by whom it is offered. That fruit of Holy Mass which grows out of its own efficacy is the surest and most abundant, it is

the essential and special fruit of the Sacrifice, because the value and efficacy of Holy Mass depend solely on the divine character of Christ and on the infinite merits of His Sacrifice on the cross. But in order that the faithful may have a greater share in this fruit of the Sacrifice, the Church surrounds Holy Mass with the greatest solemnity possible; she adorns it with expressive ceremonies and sends her prayer to heaven in suppliant chant. These accessories are not aimless, nor without signification; they are not made use of for the purpose of doing honor to man: they have a true value of their own. What incongruous ideas so many Catholics entertain concerning the solemnity of divine service! The increased ceremonial, the solemn Mass is not instituted for the entertainment of the congregation, or to foster the ambition of individuals, but for the purpose of moving God more effectually to grant the graces we implore; or in other words, to render the supplications and petitions of the Church more effectual.

212. Everything pertaining to faith and to the service of God, even the minutest detail, usage and custom, was regarded by the Venerable Catherine Emmerich as most sacred. She remarked, "Nothing is mere ceremony; all is essence and efficacy manifested by signs. All that is performed by the Church, even though her ministers through human frailty may be actuated by profane motives, is performed by the direction of the Holy Ghost. Animated confidence joined with simplicity changes everything into essence and substance."

St. Mechtildis often saw saintly Sisters of her convent released from Purgatory after the first Mass cele-

brated for them. Sometimes she beheld Christ, the Blessed Virgin and numerous other saints surrounding the altar and offering up their merits. Some souls are privileged to assist at the Mass said for their release, and then go directly to heaven.

§ 39. What is more Profitable and Meritorious—to have Masses Celebrated for Ourselves during Life, or after Death?

213. Many Catholics are solicitous to have a number of Masses celebrated after their death for the repose of their souls. For this purpose they save money and devise a portion of their estate in their last will and testament. This is good and praiseworthy, and persons intending this should by no means be dissuaded from doing so; yet it is more profitable and meritorious to have these Masses celebrated during life. St. Leonard of Port Maurice exhorts us most earnestly to have Masses celebrated for ourselves during life-time rather than after our death; and he declares that one Mass before our death is much more profitable to us than many after it. He gives the following reasons: First, if we have a Mass said for us during life-time, we are the cause of its celebration and can assist at it, which latter is impossible after our death. Secondly, if a Mass is celebrated for us during life-time, and we are perhaps in the state of sin, we may hope to receive from God's mercy, in virtue of this Mass, the grace to perceive our sinful state, to be moved to true contrition, and to reconcile ourselves with God by a sincere confession. True, God is not obliged to grant us this grace; for whoso-

ever remains consciously in the state of mortal sin, is not capable of gaining supernatural merit. But as God is infinitely merciful, He usually grants to sinners who perform a good action the grace of true contrition for their sins. This grace or efficacy of Holy Mass cannot be obtained after death. For if we die in a state of sin, even thousands of Masses would not transfer us into the state of grace; we remain forever enemies of God and children of wrath.

214. Thirdly, Holy Mass can obtain for us the grace of a happy death, because in virtue of its being offered for us God will assist us with special aid to triumph over the enemy of our souls in that decisive hour. Fourthly, if Masses are said for us before our death, their merit will accrue to us after it, and we shall thereby either be preserved entirely from Purgatory, or our punishment will be mitigated and lessened. For by every Holy Mass we pay to God a great part of our indebtedness; and if we hear it with special devotion we moreover blot out many venial sins, so that we may reasonably hope to escape a great part of our punishment after death. But if we defer these Masses until after our death, we shall be obliged to wait for their celebration in case we are in Purgatory, and this waiting is most distressing and painful. Hence it is better that the benefits accruing to us from Holy Mass be obtained in advance, than to wait for them in the torments of Purgatory.

215. Fifthly, by ordering a Mass in life-time we make an offering to God of our money, inasmuch as we give the usual stipend or alms for the support of the priest, thereby depriving ourselves of some means of gratification. After death however we deprive our-

selves of nothing; for then our earthly enjoyments have ended, and our means go to our heirs. By making bequests for Masses after our death, our action no longer includes self-denial; we give what death will inevitably deprive us of. Hence our offering cannot be so pleasing to God and so meritorious for us, as it would have been if we had made it during life-time. Sixthly, it is to be remembered that a person performing a good action in the state of grace receives a double reward. He receives a remission of part of the punishment due for his sins; and he merits a greater reward in heaven. Thus a person having a Mass said for himself during his life-time pays a part of his indebtedness to God, and merits a greater glory in heaven; but when he defers the Mass until after his death, though he thereby pays a part of his indebtedness, his glory in heaven is not increased. Even though thousands of Masses were celebrated for us after death, our heavenly glory would not be increased one degree; for in heaven merits are no longer placed to our credit: a truth to be well remembered.

216. Finally, we ought to consider that by one Holy Mass celebrated for us during life more punishment is remitted to us than by a great number celebrated after our death. If we have offended someone and ask his pardon immediately, we may easily obtain it; but if we hesitate and defer seeking reconciliation till the matter is perhaps taken before the court, then one word spoken in our defense may cost us many dollars. Now we offend God often and in many ways during life: if we implore his pardon immediately and as long as we live, and manifest our willingness to atone for the offense by some good work—for instance

by alms-deeds, acts of charity, a Holy Mass, etc.—this may suffice to cancel our whole indebtedness. But if we let our indebtedness accumulate until we appear before the tribunal of God, the penalty will be much heavier. In the next world the time of grace ceases, God judges everything according to the rigor of His justice; and accordingly every venial sin is punished so severely that many Masses will not suffice to cancel what one alone would have cancelled during our life-time. If we have the misfortune of committing a mortal sin after having a Mass celebrated for us during life, we shall more easily receive the grace of true contrition and sincere confession.

217. St. Bernard relates of a pious and wealthy merchant in Genoa, that the last will he had made was the occasion of most uncharitable remarks, because it contained no provision for Masses to be said for the repose of his soul. All his papers and business records were diligently searched to find an explanation how it happened that so devout a man could be guilty of neglecting so important a matter. To the great edification of all it was finally discovered that the deceased had caused thousands of Masses to be said for him during his life-time. He had taken to heart the words of St. Bonaventure, "God values a trifling voluntary penance in this life much higher than a more severe but compulsory one in the next; just as a little gold is more valuable than a great lump of lead." Hence St. Anselm asserts, "To hear one Holy Mass devoutly in life is more profitable than to bequeath so much that thousands can be said after death."

And how much more meritorious will these Masses be, if we offer them for the relief of the Suffering Souls!

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (Matth. v. 7.) Hence St. Paul exhorts us, "Let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid." (Hebr. iv. 16.)

§ 40. What Amount of Punishment is Remitted by a Holy Mass?

218. It has been repeatedly stated in the course of these treatises, that the efficacy and value, that is, the internal efficiency of Holy Mass as a Sacrifice of propitiation and impetration, is infinite. The full price of our redemption, the inexhaustible treasure of atonement and merit gained for us by Christ on the cross are offered by Him continually to His Divine Father for the purpose of applying them to mankind. The Holy Sacrifice of Mass therefore contains in itself superabundant atonement for the cancellation of all sins and punishments, an all-sufficient price for obtaining innumerable graces and spiritual favors. Hence the atoning value of Holy Mass is infinite. Nevertheless the efficacy of Holy Mass in its application to man is not unlimited, since even the efficacy of the sacrifice of the cross is limited to a certain extent, as the learned Suarez declares. The fruits of Holy Mass, in their application to man, are always limited as to their measure. Hence St. Thomas observes, "Although the power of Christ in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is infinite, yet the effect for which this sacrament is ordained is limited. For this reason the entire punishment of those detained in Purgatory is not remitted by one Mass, and the priest offering this Sacrifice is not absolved from all debt of atone-

ment which he owes for his sins. Consequently it may sometimes happen that several Masses are required before full satisfaction is made for a sin."

219. Moreover the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass does not always produce so manifold nor so powerful an effect as the person for whom it is offered is capable of receiving. Its efficacy is restricted to a certain measure, though in particular cases the effects may be greater or less. This is demonstrated by the fact that the Church usually offers the Holy Sacrifice repeatedly to obtain a favor, for instance the release of a soul from Purgatory, the conversion of a sinner, or bodily health. If Holy Mass would produce its full effect in every case, one single application of this august Sacrifice would be sufficient to obtain the desired grace. The blessings derived from Holy Mass do not result entirely from its essence, nor from the spiritual disposition of the person for whom it is celebrated, although the latter considerably influences the measure of the blessings: the reason of this limited efficacy of Holy Mass—mark it well, Christian soul,—is to be found in the will of Christ. And why did He so ordain? The renowned theologian Sporer answers, "Christ, the Son of God, willed and ordained that a Sacrifice should be offered to Him, and that it should produce a certain and limited effect of atonement and intercession, to be determined by Him and applied according to the capacity of those offering it, in order that this sacrifice might be offered more frequently and more zealously."

220. St. Gregory relates that thirty Masses had to be said for a religious who had without permission retained a few gold coins. Constantia, a daughter of St.

Elisabeth of Portugal, died soon after her marriage to the king of Castile. As soon as her mother was informed of her death, she hastened to join her husband who was in Cantarem. Presently a hermit asked for an audience; and he told them that their daughter Constantia had repeatedly appeared to him, stating that she had been sentenced to a long and painful Purgatory. But it had been promised to her that she would be released after a year, if Holy Mass was celebrated for her every day. The queen conferred with her husband, and he deemed it advisable to do what had been asked of them in so extraordinary a manner. Besides the king considered it not more than proper that a Christian father should have Masses said for his deceased daughter. Hence they resolved to act on the suggestion of the pious permit, and entrusted a saintly priest by the name of Mendez with the celebration of these Masses. At the close of the year, when the last Mass had been said, Constantia appeared to her mother, and told her that she had that day been released in consequence of these Masses, and that she was about to enter heaven.

221. The faithful who take a personal and active part in the celebration of the Sacrifice, who assist at it with devotion and thus share in its celebration, thereby gain a special and particular fruit, either through the action and qualification of the ministering agent, or through the Sacrifice itself in virtue of its divine efficacy. It is generally held by theologians that this special and particular fruit of the Sacrifice is granted without restriction or diminution to all persons present during the offering of it, without regard to their number; every one individually receives the full and whole

fruit of grace equivalent to his co-operation, his manner of offering, his piety and devotion.

222. But the case is different when we regard Holy Mass as a Sacrifice of impetration offered by the priest as Christ's agent. Here the question presents itself: Does the Sacrifice, when offered for many, procure for every one individually the full and whole fruit; that is, does it procure just so much fruit as it would if it were offered for him alone? or is the fruit distributed in such a manner among those for whom it is offered, that their part becomes less in proportion to the number of those who share in it? The majority of theologians are of the opinion—and this opinion is sustained by interior and exterior reasons—, that the fruits of the Sacrifice are distributed individually; and that they are therefore lessened in proportion as the number of participants increases to whom the priest by special intention applies them. This should not be forgotten when we cause the Holy Sacrifice to be offered for one or more souls in Purgatory.

223. The Holy Souls, helplessly suffering in Purgatory, are greatly in need of Holy Mass, thereby to receive from divine justice a lessening of the duration and intensity of their torments. The Church teaches that Holy Mass aids the deceased in a special manner, more so than all other suffrages. Holy Mass aids them more than prayers and indulgences, more than fasting, alms-deeds and night-watches, more than works of charity and piety offered for them by virtue of the communion of saints. Holy Mass offered for them is never ineffectual. To what extent the Sacrifice of the Mass aids the Suffering Souls is beyond our cognition; for it has not been revealed to us what

measure of benefit the Suffering Souls receive from this Sacrifice. Whether a soul is to be released more or less speedily from Purgatory is decided by Him whose justice and mercy are equally inscrutable. For this reason it is not superfluous, but rather necessary to cause the Holy Sacrifice to be celebrated repeatedly for one and the same soul, to render its admission to heavenly glory so much the surer. This applies even to the so-called privileged Mass by which besides the usual fruit of the Sacrifice a plenary indulgence is gained for the departed soul in virtue of a personal or local privilege of the altar; for even the application of such an indulgence, being granted for the deceased only by way of suffrage, is left wholly to the disposal of divine mercy.

§ 41. Is the Celebration of Low or Private Masses Permitted?

224. To explain correctly the terms "private" and "public" Mass, due regard must be had to the sense in which a Mass is called a private one. "It seems to accord best with ecclesiastical terminology," says Schmid in his "Liturgy," Vol. I., "to call that Mass a public one which is said for a public cause, and which the faithful are earnestly invited to attend. Every Mass not having these qualifications is a private one." Consequently the parochial Mass, the conventual Mass, and Masses said on public occasions are public Masses; whereas a Mass which is said for a private intention, and at which the congregation is at liberty to assist or not, is a private Mass. Mahrzohl, in his "Liturgy," Vol. II., says, "Low or private Masses are such as are said on an altar in a church or

chapel without solemnity and chant, with the assistance of only one or two attendants." Hence a Mass said publicly in church and attended by a larger or smaller number of persons, is nevertheless a private Mass. Regarded in this view, public Masses are at the same time solemn ones; they are celebrated with solemnity, for instance with chant, organ accompaniment, a greater number of lighted candles, more attendants, etc. These Masses are usually termed "High Masses," and if celebrated with deacon and subdeacon, "Solemn High Masses."

225. Private Masses have been and still are regarded by many with disfavor, but only from misconception. For the essence of Mass consists in the offering of bread and wine, its consecration or changing into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and communion, or its reception by the minister of the Sacrifice. Hence the offertory, the consecration and communion are the essential parts of Holy Mass. All this is found in the private Mass; hence it is a true Sacrifice, in which the sacrifice of the cross is re-enacted in an unbloody manner; consequently this Mass is not only permitted, but most beneficial and salutary.

226. True, in early times public Masses were the rule when circumstances permitted their celebration; but there is evidence that private Masses were said even then. Tertullian and St. Cyprian mention occasions when only a few persons assisted at Mass; for instance in prisons. St. Eusebius and St. Gregory of Tours also relate that Masses were said in private houses and in prisons. Constantine the Great had a private oratory in his palace, and had even a portable altar constructed which he took along with him to the

camp, so that Mass might be celebrated for him. (Euseb. *Vita Const.* Lib. IV.)—Sozomenes relates of St. Gregory Nazianzen, that he often celebrated the holy mysteries in a private oratory.—St. Paulinus, bishop of Nola, in his last illness had an altar erected in front of his bed and celebrated Mass on it shortly before his death.—St. Gregory the Great writes of bishop Cassius, that he celebrated Mass every day in an oratory, because he could not go to the church on account of illness.—To St. John, bishop of Syracuse, he wrote that he should not forbid Mass to be said in the house of Venantius Patricius.—Once, when St. John the Almoner perceived that the people left the church after the gospel, he turned to them and said, "It is for your sake that I come to church. For myself I might celebrate the Holy Sacrifice at home."

227. It is clear from this testimony, that private Masses date back to the earliest ages of the Church. Hence the Council of Trent declares: "The holy Synod desires that the faithful present should receive holy communion not only spiritually but sacramentally in every Mass, in order to share more abundantly in this Most Holy Sacrifice; yet, if this is not always possible, it does not condemn those private Masses in which the priest alone communicates, but approves of and commends them, because they also must be regarded as public Masses for the reason that the faithful communicate spiritually, and because they are celebrated by the public minister of the Church." (Sess. 22, 5.) And in its canons the holy Synod declares: "If anybody asserts that the Masses in which the priest alone communicates sacramentally are illicit and therefore to be abolished, let him be anathema."

228. In this is shown the maternal solicitude of the Church for her children. Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted the sacraments for mankind, that by their faithful reception men might share in the graces of redemption. A sacrament validly administered attains the end for which it was instituted by Christ, if the person receiving it on his part places no obstacle. The administration of these divine means of salvation was entrusted to the Church. Hence she has made the rite of administering the sacraments in a solemn and appropriate manner the object of her most tender solicitude. Though originating in the institution of Christ, the present form of this rite is an offspring of the Church; and with holy rigor she insists that her ministers preserve it in its purity. But she also has due regard for circumstances, and herein she proves herself a tender mother. Although she commands the observance of her discipline under pain of mortal sin, she excuses from this observance in case of impossibility.

229. How beautiful and expressive for instance is the rite of baptism! Yet in case of necessity the baptism of blood or of desire is a valid substitute for the sacramental baptism of water; and the Church recognizes the validity of private baptism if rightly administered. But if such persons survive, the former are bound to receive the sacramental baptism of water; for the latter the Church ordains that the omitted ceremonies be supplied in church as soon as possible. In danger of death, when a priest is not obtainable to give absolution, perfect contrition with the firm purpose to confess our sins as soon as possible, will cleanse us from sin; should we survive the danger,

we must confess our sins to obtain their forgiveness. The same applies to the other sacraments: when circumstances prevent the observance of the whole rite, the Church is so indulgent that she even exhorts the faithful to content themselves with what is essential to attain eternal bliss. The rich fruits of these sacred rites, however, are obtained only by those for whom they are performed.

230. The same holds good with relation to Holy Mass. Solemn High Mass represents the most meritorious form of divine worship; the beautiful ceremonies duly observed in a spirit of faith procure for the faithful the most abundant measure of the fruits of this Sacrifice in virtue of its own divine efficacy. (Suarez, Disput. 79. VIII. 5.) In solemn High Mass we possess the full treasury of divine grace. The accidentals of this treasury may be removed; its essence will still remain. The more perfect the observance of the incidental solemnity of Mass, the more fruit will accrue to the soul. But circumstances often prevent the faithful from having the Holy Sacrifice offered in its most solemn form; so that, if this form were an indispensable condition of Mass, its celebration would often be impeded.

231. Hence Schmid, in his "Liturgy," vol. I., says: "The attendance at the daily celebration of the Sacrifice, to many Christians the beginning of their day's work, would in this case have to be omitted. Many a scattered congregation without a house of worship would be deprived of the happiness of assisting at the holy mysteries in a private house; those members of the parish who for some reason or other cannot assist at High Mass, would be deprived of the

opportunity of offering themselves as a living holocaust to the Lord during the celebration of the august Sacrifice of the New Law; many a Sunday and holyday would not be observed. As to the application of Mass, as now customary, let those inclined to criticism on this point remember that every person feels more or less affection for some particular friend; hence the permission of the Church to have Mass celebrated for individuals is but a natural recognition of this irrepressible sentiment. The difference of solemnity in the form of Mass originates in circumstances: how could everything necessary for a solemn High Mass be observed every day?" For this reason the Church permits low or private Masses, in order that none of the faithful may be prevented from sharing in the fruit of this sublime Sacrifice. High Mass is not to be slighted or regarded as superfluous because by force of circumstances low or private Masses have become the rule; for the spiritual gain increases in proportion to the solemnity.

232. Since private Masses are said by a public minister of the Church not for himself alone, but for all the faithful belonging to the Church, every true member of Christ's mystical body has a share in every such Mass. A greater share of the blessings of the holy Sacrifice is gained by him, who spiritually includes himself in Mass whenever he cannot assist at it in person. A still greater share is granted to him who causes Mass to be said for a special intention, either for himself or for others; for he that gives an alms for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice is without doubt preferred, on account of this good work, to those who do not give an alms. The solemnity of the form of

Mass is graded correspondingly to the amount of the alms; the degree of spiritual profit is graded according to the solemnity of the form; for God promised to reward every good work. A still greater measure of spiritual profit is accorded to him who assists devoutly at the Holy Sacrifice and makes the acts of spiritual communion. The manifold treasures of Holy Mass are still more abundantly showered on him who assists at it with due preparation and devotion, and receives communion sacramentally, doing moreover what is in his power to cause Holy Mass to be celebrated in its most perfect and solemn form. This shall be demonstrated more explicitly in the following paragraph. Nevertheless this measure of spiritual benefit or fruit must always remain limited, in order that "the Holy Sacrifice of Mass," so the learned Sporer remarks, "may continue to be celebrated according to the intention of our Divine Savior with ever increasing zeal and devotion."

233. Although the fruits of Holy Mass are limited to a certain number and measure, as is also the case with regard to the sacrifice of the cross, the Sacrifice of the Mass is nevertheless of infinite value in the sight of God. It is priceless and of infinite value because Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God and Splendor of the Father, offers in it His own Body and Blood. Remembering that our Divine Savior gave us the consoling assurance, "Amen, amen I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it you" (John XVI. 23.), our courage must be enlivened to the highest degree when we hold in our hands Jesus Himself, His beloved Son, while praying in, through and with Him.

If we reflect that our brethren and sisters in the purifying flames of Purgatory belong to the great community of those who are one family with us in Christ, namely the holy Catholic Church; and that Christ, who once offered Himself on the cross in a bloody manner for the salvation of all mankind, daily renews this Sacrifice in an unbloody manner on our altars:—then it will not be difficult for us to believe that this august mystery everywhere exercises its atoning power, whether celebrated in the marble halls of St. Peter's in Rome amid the splendor of gorgeous vestments, brilliant illumination, a profusion of flowers and of master-pieces of Christian art, or in the poor hut erected by the newly-converted savage in the wild forest of a distant land—a place of worship which by its raw material and rude construction gives evidence of his want of means and lack of ideas, but which at the same time demonstrates the fact that Catholics are not tenacious of exterior forms, but intimately wedded to the essence; that it is not exterior beauty, but interior worth that attracts them. This sentiment it is that produces a salutary effect for our spiritual and temporal welfare, provided we offer ourselves to God with contrite and humble hearts, together with all our possessions and whatever is dear to us. And for this reason the Church not only permits, but heartily endorses and commends low or private Masses.

§ 42. The Relative Value of One High Mass and Five Private Masses.

234. We remarked before that by a Holy Mass not the whole, but only a part of our debts or punishments is cancelled; for in its application to us the

value of a Mass is limited. A well may be ever so deep and filled entirely with water, nevertheless the quantity of water we draw depends on the capacity of the vessel we use for drawing; but the oftener we draw, the more water we get. The same is true with regard to Holy Mass: the oftener we assist devoutly at Mass, the greater will become our store of merit, the more debts will be cancelled for us, and the greater will be our glory in heaven. The vessels with which water is drawn from the well may differ as to their capacity, and therefore one may hold more water than another. In like manner, the more devout and better disposed we are when assisting at Mass, and the greater in general our esteem for it is, the more fruit will we derive from the Holy Sacrifice. If we bring to the well a vessel of extraordinary capacity, one holding more water than its owner is willing that we should draw at one time, he will tell us to come oftener instead of drawing so much at once. Our Divine Savior acts similarly with regard to the Holy Sacrifice of Mass. It is His will that we should come again and again, drawing every time a new supply of grace from this inexhaustible treasury.

235. The sources from which the fruits of Holy Mass issue are manifold. They may result either from the divine efficacy of the Sacrifice itself, or from the Church as being the mystical body of Christ, or from the spiritual state of the minister who offers it. When we refer in general and without precise determination of our meaning to the fruit of the Holy Sacrifice of Mass, we refer above all to that fruit which originates solely and directly in Christ and in His infinite merits, and which is therefore the most copious, the most cer-

tain, the essential and real fruit of the Sacrifice. In the second place our attention is directed to the value and efficacy of Mass inasmuch as its celebration is an act of the entire Church; or in other words, inasmuch as the priest celebrates it in the name of and commissioned by the Church. In the third place the value and efficacy of the Mass is to be considered inasmuch as its celebration is a personal good work of the sacrificing priest and the assisting faithful.

236. In the Gospel man is likened to a tree. God, the Divine Gardener, as it were grafted into us by justification a branch of the tree of life, Christ our Lord; and thereby the supernatural life of grace was transmitted from Him to us, so that now we are capable of producing good fruits by performing virtuous and meritorious works in the service of God. He who by sanctifying grace ennobles our being, desires of us something in return, viz. good, supernatural; holy works, by which we merit eternal bliss, the supernatural, heavenly reward promised to us by God; hence these supernaturally good works are also called meritorious works. A servant works for his master and executes his commands; and in return he receives the wages for his labor. We also should labor in God's service by fulfilling His will and keeping His commandments; and in return He will reward us with the joys of heaven. The will of God is made known to us by the ten commandments and the precepts of the Church; and the spiritual and corporal works of mercy are pronounced meritorious acts of charity. To gain merits for heaven we must perform good works. We must watch, pray, labor, suffer, and strive to attain sanctity and win heaven. Eternal life is to be for us

not only a heritage, a pure gift of divine mercy, but also a reward which we must earn, a crown of justice which we must win in legitimate combat. The superabundant satisfaction made by Christ does not relieve us of the duty of making satisfaction ourselves to God by works of atonement, and of gathering merit for heaven; but all our works of atonement have their quickening source in Christ, from whom they draw their efficacy and value. He offers them to His heavenly Father, and through His meditation they are accepted.

237. Among these personal good works the celebration of Mass by the priest, and the devout assistance at it by the faithful holds the first place. When the priest celebrates Holy Mass and the faithful participate in the celebration by their assistance, by serving at the altar, by giving a stipend, etc., they undoubtedly perform the most sacred and salutary of all good, meritorious and worshipful actions. The Church herself declares that "no action performed by Christians is so holy and divine as this," namely the celebration of Holy Mass. The celebration of and assistance at Mass, as a personal action, is certainly a supremely good work; yet the value of this good work, as we have already been informed, can only be a limited one as regards those who perform it. If the necessary conditions are fulfilled, the celebration of Mass on the part of the priest and assistance at it on the part of the faithful not only has like every other good work the power of obtaining various benefits, but also the power of cancelling punishment of sin and of meriting an increase of sanctifying grace and heavenly glory. This three-fold fruit originates in the

spiritual condition and in the act of both the sacrificing priest and the assisting faithful; to obtain it they must be in the state of grace, and they must sacrifice and pray with a good intention, with faith and devotion. The greater the sanctity, piety, faith and charity of the priest and the assisting faithful, the more copious will be the fruit gained by both.

238. In Holy Mass it is not only the priest and the faithful who offer the sacrifice, but the whole Church unites with them in supplication. This supplication is an act of the universal Church; in other words, the priest performs the sacred act in which he is engaged at the altar in the name and by the commission of the Church as such. The Holy Sacrifice of Mass and the liturgical office of the Breviary form the principal part of the public divine service of the Church, imposed by her on her ministers specially ordained and commissioned for this purpose. For not only man individually, but religious society as such is bound in duty to do homage to God. Hence a common and public divine service is necessary; a visible cult is the essential bond of the religious communion known as the Church. The Church as a society of the faithful must worship God, as every man individually is bound to do, with all spiritual and bodily faculties; that is, she must adore, thank, implore and propitiate God not only by internal, but also by external acts. This four-fold duty she fulfils by prayer and sacrifice, both of which are intimately united, the one pervading and supplementing the other. At the altar the whole Church sacrifices and prays through her representative, the priest; there she offers to God the sacrifice of praise, thanksgiving, propitiation and impetra-

tion. To mankind the value and efficacy of this sacrifice must ever be limited, because the members of the Church never are nor can be infinitely holy. The fruit of every good work performed by an individual depends on his spiritual condition and the intrinsic value of his action. In like manner the value and efficacy of Holy Mass, as regards the application of its fruits to the souls of men, depend on the worthiness, merit and sanctity of the members of the Church; for the offering of the Sacrifice is not the act of any individual member as such, but it is the act of the universal Church.

239. Attention must here be called to the fact that the Church as such cannot merit and atone; for to do so there is need of the active or passive agency of a person in the state of grace. But such an active or passive agency, productive of merit and atonement, is not exercised by the Church in Holy Mass. The celebration of this Sacrifice by the Church can therefore draw down graces and blessings from heaven only by way of impetration; but this her supplication is always sure sooner or later to find a gracious hearing. The efficacy of the prayer of the Church is by no means dependent on the worthiness or unworthiness of the ministering priest, but obtains its effect by virtue of its own divine power. Sanctity is an essential mark of the Church which can never be wanting to her; hence her prayer is always graciously received by God and rewarded with most abundant blessings. But the efficacy of the prayer offered by the Church through her members depends on the degree of sanctity in the Church; that is, on the sanctity of her members, which is not always and un-

changeably the same, but which may at different times be greater or less. And so also the sacrifice of the Church is more or less acceptable to God and salutary to mankind, according as the degree of sanctity attained by the Church in her members is higher or lower. There being divers formulas of the Mass, the fruit of impetration to be attained by the Sacrifice offered in the name of the Church can be multiplied; and these fruits can be applied in a special manner to various particular ends. Hence not only the degree of sanctity in the Church, but the quality of the sacrificial prayers and of the entire sacrificial rite influence the measure and quality of the fruits of the Sacrifice gained by the Church; for this reason the value and efficacy of the Sacrifice offered in the name of the Church is so much greater as the rite is more solemn, the prayer more expressive; but the prayer of the Church always remains limited as to its value before God and its efficacy for the souls of men.

240. But when we consider Holy Mass in itself —namely the supreme dignity of Christ, the Priest and Victim of the Sacrifice, and the inexhaustible wealth of its fruit as the unbloody renewal of the Sacrifice of the cross,—then it becomes evident that it is a Sacrifice of infinite value. As an infinitely valuable and infinitely perfect Sacrifice it possesses also infinite power to produce those effects which are proper to it by the ordinance of Christ. The infinite price of redemption, the infinite treasure of atonement and merit contained in Holy Mass have their source in Christ, not on account of His offering Himself on the altar during Mass, but for the reason that He once offered Himself on the cross. Christ can no longer

atone and merit by the Sacrifice of the Mass; He can only continue to apply to us, according to the condition of our souls and our participation in this divine Sacrifice, the atonement and merit achieved for us on the cross. Holy Mass, as a Sacrifice, is the fountain from which we draw grace; it is the Sacrifice of the Church. In its relation to God and in itself Holy Mass is of infinite value; but for man or in man it can not produce infinite effects, as was explained in a former paragraph. The essential fruit of this Sacrifice therefore has its direct and only source in the self-immolation of Christ; and consequently this fruit is entirely independent of the properties of the Church's prayer and of the spiritual condition of the sacrificing priest and the assisting faithful.

241. We must therefore distinguish between the essential fruit of Holy Mass originating in Christ, and the incidental fruit originating in the liturgical prayers and in the spiritual condition of the faithful. This latter is added to the essential fruit for the immediate benefit of him for whom the Sacrifice is offered. If a person desires to receive special graces by means of the celebration of Mass, he can attain this effect by the performance of good works, because God rewards every good work performed by man; and the Holy Sacrifice in this respect is intended to be a help for us, to attain sanctification and the salvation of our souls. The most efficacious means of participating in the fruits of Holy Mass is the giving of alms for the purpose of causing its celebration. The greater a person's esteem is for this august Sacrifice the more his heart will be inclined to self-denial for the purpose of having it celebrated, and the greater will be his share in the

Sacrifice when offered for him or according to his intention. There is a most intimate relation between the internal and external acts of man; springing from one and the same motive, they influence and supplement each other. Whatever affects the soul—joy and sorrow, love and hatred, hope and fear—expresses itself exteriorly. This applies also to the interior acts of worship. Or should the abundant wealth of internal affections, the ardent devotion and love of a godly soul not be manifested exteriorly, when the whole man is animated with these sentiments? No; he can not confine in his soul his worship of God during the Holy Sacrifice, but gives vent to it in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles. He folds his hands, bends his knees and prostrates himself in the presence of his Maker and Redeemer. In a spirit of self-sacrifice he even denies himself in some things in order to assist in causing the full ceremonial of ecclesiastical functions to be performed at the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice.—The interior acts of divine worship are rendered more valuable, permanent and steadfast, when they find expression in the body, taking to themselves as it were flesh and blood. On the other hand, where the forms of exterior worship are despised and neglected, the internal worship also languishes and dies away.

242. The devout disposition of the sacrificing priest and the assisting faithful is not the source of the sacrificial fruit of Holy Mass, but a condition necessarily to be fulfilled in order to gain a more abundant measure of this fruit. The faithful assisting at Mass or causing it to be celebrated thereby gain a special sacrificial fruit, more or less abundant according to the

greater or less degree of their co-operation, piety and devotion. God demands our co-operation when granting His favors; the better we are prepared and disposed, the more liberal He is as a rule in dispensing His graces. The learned theologian Sporer says, "The better disposed and the holier a person is, the more zealous and devout is his prayer for himself and and others during Holy Mass; and so he will gain for himself and others richer gifts of grace and merit, and make greater atonement for his sins." But even though we were willing to abandon all things in order to receive immediately the grace we implore, and if for this same purpose we would live most holily, nevertheless our prayer through this Sacrifice is not always heard at once. The all-wise Providence of God, who disposes everything according to the designs of His omnipotence; the will of our merciful Highpriest Jesus Christ, who offers on the altar the price of His Blood to produce a determinate effect of greater or less amplitude—both demand that the Sacrifice be offered not only with increased fervor and devotion, but also that it be offered repeatedly. This is confirmed by the practice of the Church who repeatedly offers this most sublime Sacrifice to obtain divine favors.

243. To participate the more efficiently in the sacrificial fruits of Mass, the faithful are zealously intent on offering up themselves and all their possessions to God. With Holy Scripture, the Fathers and the Church theologians divide works of satisfaction into three groups; and St. Thomas very appropriately explains how these three kinds of goods are adapted to their different purposes. Man possesses three kinds of goods: goods of the soul, goods of the body, and

goods of fortune; and it is not more than right that we should apply all three in rendering satisfaction to God for our offences against Him. Every good work that we perform is available for this purpose. By alms-deeds we deprive ourselves of a portion of our goods of fortune; by fasting we deny ourselves a bodily gratification; and by prayer we dedicate and subject to God our whole soul with all its faculties. Again, concupiscence which is the root of all evil is three-fold. Fasting is directed against the lust of the flesh and the sins proceeding therefrom; alms-deeds against concupiscence of the eyes; the humble supplication of prayer against the pride of life. Finally, every sin is an offense against God, against our neighbor, or against ourselves. By prayer we make reparation of our sin against God; by alms-deeds, for that against our neighbor; and by fasting, for the injury done to ourselves. By this means the honor of which God was deprived by sin is restored; and man is punished by the withdrawal of a lawful pleasure, in reparation of the offense committed by unlawful indulgence.

244. The atonement and merits of Christ come to us from the cross through the sacraments and chiefly through Holy Mass. The greater our spirit of penance, the more abundantly will the Lord endow us with heavenly grace. The more zealously we therefore perform these three kinds of good works, the more abundantly will we draw grace upon grace from this inexhaustible source of blessings. If by the performance of the least good work we receive a particular grace through Holy Mass, and thus become sharers in the sacrificial fruit thereof, then who will presume

to deny that our reward will be the greater, the greater the sacrifices that we have brought and the saintlier the lives that we lead? If an alms is given for a low Mass, and if thereby a certain measure of the atoning merits of Christ is granted to the giver, who will presume to assert that corresponding fruits are not obtained from the Holy Sacrifice, when the alms is increased five-fold, ten-fold, or more, to procure its celebration with a more solemn rite? The greater the alms that is offered, the more strongly the giver of the alms renounces the dangerous attachment to the goods of fortunes as well as their enjoyment; and he thereby also expresses his desire of uniting himself more fervently with the prayers of the Church, and his soul is thus better disposed to share in the sacrificial fruits of the Mass. The more elaborate the forms of the ritual, the greater piety and renunciation do they express, and the more highly God Himself will be pleased with such worship. When Magdalen anointed the feet of our Lord with precious ointment, He praised her for it, saying, "She has wrought a good work upon me." (Matth. xxvi. 10.) God also expressed His pleasure at the sacrifice of Abel, and His displeasure at that of Cain.

245. If the heavens were opened and the King of glory were to appear on the altar in visible splendor, how richly we would adorn the house of God to receive Him! The fact that on the altar He veils His glory under the sacramental species, and comes to us in obscurity and humility to confer His grace, is surely no reason for honoring Him less; on the contrary the more He humbles Himself, the more strongly the gratitude of His children ought to feel itself spurred

on to enhance His Sacrifice and to adorn His altars with the best and richest ornaments at their disposal. Good Christians therefore willingly offer the most select and beautiful productions of nature and art to our Savior in the Most Holy Sacrifice, in celebration of which the children of the Church militant vie with the glorious choirs of the blessed spirits who sing at the throne of the Lamb throughout all eternity a new canticle of praise and adoration: "To Him that sitteth on the throne, and the Lamb, benediction and honor and glory and power for ever and ever." (Apoc. v. 13.) The Church at all times was solicitous to surround this most sublime and august mystery of faith with all possible splendor, ordering the sacrificial act to be performed in a manner most conducive to the greater glory of God and to our own sanctification and salvation; so that it depends only on us to satisfy the promptings of our zeal and devotion for the honor of God and our temporal and eternal welfare. If a Christian therefore, in his zeal and devotion, offers not only five times, but twenty-five times the amount of the usual alms, in order to have the Holy Sacrifice celebrated with greater solemnity—should he then not be entitled to expect a corresponding increase in his share of merit? For our own spiritual good our Savior limited the efficacy of this divine Sacrifice, in order that we might personally and individually participate in its celebration more frequently and with greater zeal: why then should a Christian not share in its sacrificial fruit the more abundantly, the more generously he contributes to have it celebrated?

246. The way of sacrifice is the royal way leading to a glorious goal in eternal life; even amid the trials,

troubles and sufferings of this way the Lord refreshes and quickens the souls. Hence the Christian is not content merely with the celebration of the Sacrifice, but he extends his zeal to the sacred vessels and vestments and to the place where the Sacrifice is offered. If the people of Israel gladly and with willing hearts brought their offerings to build a temple to the Lord, the children of the Church must do their utmost to honor their God veiled in the sacramental species, who for love of them so graciously condescends to appear among them in Holy Mass. It is for this reason that beautiful temples are erected to Jesus Christ, in which He is served by priests and levites in gorgeous vestments, in a splendor of lights, amid a profusion of flowers, the odor of incense, the solemn strains of chant and organ, and the harmonious peal of bells. While doing this the Church does not forget the living temples of the Holy Ghost; she is solicitous for the poor and distressed, because she recognizes in them Christ Himself. She acts on the principle of doing the one without neglecting the other. Even as early as in the first centuries the faithful made rich gifts for the service of the altar; but whenever distress prevailed, or when the persecutors of the faith threatened to rob the treasures of the sanctuary, then the Christians converted these treasures into alms for the poor; as we read for instance in the records of the martyrdom of St. Lawrence. The more liberally a person contributes to the adornment of the house of God, the greater is his share in the sacrificial fruit of Holy Mass.

247. In the life of St. Theresa we find an apt illustration from which we can learn how pleasing to

God is the zeal for His house. Don Bernardino de Mendoza had donated to the saint a splendid estate in the neighborhood of Vadadolid for the purpose of founding a convent. Before the new convent was finished, he fell sick and was deprived of speech. He was unable to make his confession before death, and could indicate his contrition only by signs. St. Theresa was greatly distressed, for she was concerned for the salvation of his soul. Christ our Lord appeared to her, saying, "My daughter, thy benefactor's salvation was in great danger; but he found grace on account of the donation he so magnanimously made to thee. Nevertheless, his soul shall not be released from Purgatory until the first Mass shall have been said in the new convent." St. Theresa could not rest till the new convent was ready at least so far that Mass could be said within its walls. A temporary chapel was therefore provided, in which the first Mass was said on the following Sunday. At the communion the saint saw the soul of her benefactor surrounded by supernal splendor. He thanked her and told her he was about to enter heaven.

248. The doctrine and practice of the Church both favor the theory that the efficacy of Holy Mass is enhanced by the greater solemnity of its form and by the spirit of sacrifice evinced by the faithful for this purpose. The Church proclaims this her faith both in dogmatical definitions, in her official prayers and liturgy, and in her entire public worship, which latter culminates in High Mass. The Church lives, prays, and acts in faith and by faith. The belief of the Church in Purgatory, and in the efficacy of her intercession for the Suffering Souls, as also the maternal charity

with which she is animated, find expression most clearly in her whole life, but especially in a solemn *Requiem* Mass. She directs the faithful to increase the alms for the celebration of Mass, thereby to conduce towards an increase of its solemnity. Now, if the faithful would not receive a corresponding increase of sacrificial fruit by their increased alms, the Church would act unjustly towards them; the priest would even not be permitted to receive the full stipend for a low Mass, because in some countries more than one Mass is said for the sum to which it amounts. For this very reason some persons send their alms to other countries. They are impelled by self-interest, not by a desire of honoring God; and so they lose the effect of the Mass. The Church's design is not unfair, but holy and just, when she asks a greater stipend for a chanted or solemn High Mass; because according to the inscrutable will of Christ the measure of sacrificial fruit increases correspondingly with the augmentation of solemnity and the increased offering of the faithful. Jesus said, "Take heed of what you hear: In what measure you shall mete, it shall be measured to you again, and more shall be given to you." (Mark IV. 24.)

249. Sometimes, when the faithful order High Masses to be celebrated, they are accused of vanity. They are told that "Mass is Mass," and that it is useless and extravagant to have any other than a low Mass said. True, Mass is Mass; for our Divine Savior is offered in every Mass in the same manner. But the measure of sacrificial fruit varies for individuals; and therefore such expressions proceed either from want of knowledge or from indifference in matters of religion. If less costly sacred vessels,

etc., are used at Mass on account of poverty, or—as is the case with some religious Orders—from love of poverty; or if other circumstances necessitate a less solemn manner of celebrating Mass—such cases as these are certainly not to be censured. But if Holy Mass be thus celebrated from a motive of avarice or self-interest, or from negligence and carelessness, then every such celebration is a sure token of disregard and contempt for what to all true Catholics is the Most Holy in their religion. Whosoever does not entertain a deep sense of appreciation for the solemnity of divine service thereby gives conclusive evidence that his religious life is at a low ebb; and those who criticize the expense occasioned by the adornment of divine service and of the house of God, most nearly resemble the traitorous Judas. "Mary therefore took a pound of ointment of right spikenard of great price, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, he that was about to betray Him, said, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief." (John XII. 3—6.)

250. As a rule those of the faithful who are most charitable toward the poor are also most liberal in their contributions to the Church and for the purposes of solemn worship. They are solicitous to sanctify themselves not only for their own sake, but also for God's sake. Hence they continually grow in zeal to have Mass celebrated, and to have it celebrated often. We are commanded to "pray without ceasing" (I. Thes.

v. 17.); and so also must the Holy Sacrifice be offered without intermission, in order that we may obtain its fruit and grace in ever increasing abundance. So God ordained it, because His glory and our salvation are both promoted by continual Sacrifice. Where the means and circumstances do not allow of a greater expense for Church purposes, our Lord takes the will for the deed. He was pleased with the mite of the widow, and regarded favorably the Good Thief's prayer for pardon. The greater an exertion we therefore make in gathering the alms for Holy Mass, the more favor shall we find in the sight of God, and the more abundant will be our share in the sacrificial fruit.

What has hitherto been said of the power and efficacy of Holy Mass demonstrates clearly that it is an inexhaustible source of grace. The admission to this source is easy and free to all. God in His mercy is anxious to enrich us with heavenly gifts and blessings. Oh, that our hearts were less attached to worldly matters and cares! Oh, that we would draw copiously from this inexhaustible source of Divine mercy! If we only knew how to apply the Holy Sacrifice of Mass for our benefit, how soon we should be rich in grace! Hence it is most deplorable that there are so many who have no true conception of this sublime mystery, nor proper regard for it—that mysterious Sacrifice, which is the marvel and joy of heaven, and the consolation and salvation of the world.

251. One day, when St. Francis Borgias was about to celebrate Mass, it seemed to him that he heard from far away the last sigh of a very dear deceased friend of his. He at once offered the Holy Sacrifice for him.

At the end of the Mass the departed soul of his friend appeared to him and said, "At the moment when you heard my sigh I gave my soul back to its Maker. I was sentenced to Purgatory and was already in the place of torment; the Holy Sacrifice which you just offered for me opened to me the gates of heaven. I shall never forget your charity." Oh, let us always remember this occurence; let us hasten to the relief of the Suffering Souls! And as Holy Church, in the Council of Trent, recommended Holy Mass as the most efficient means of releasing souls from Purgatory, let us do our utmost, without ever flagging in our zeal, to make use of this means devoutly and often. Let us offer the Holy Sacrifice especially for those souls who are dear to us and have a claim on our love and gratitude. The efficacy of other means for the release of the Suffering Souls is attached to certain conditions, of whose sufficient fulfillment we can not be absolutely certain. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass however does not lose its value and efficacy even though the priest who offers it be unworthy to perform the august rite. There is nothing that can impede the effects produced in virtue of its divine essence.

§ 43. The Fruits of Holy Mass are not Granted Exclusively to the Soul for whom the Sacrifice is Offered.

252. As we have seen, the main purpose and effect of Holy Mass is to render to God the worship of adoration and thanksgiving, of propitiation and impetration, that mankind owes to Him; at the same time one of its essential qualities is, that it can be offered up for man himself to promote his bodily and spiritual

welfare. Among the many effects of Holy Mass there are graces, spiritual benefits and blessings, temporal gifts and bounties, which God grants us in consequence of the offering of this Sacrifice; all of which may in a real and full sense be called sacrificial fruits. To these fruits we refer as a rule when we say that the Sacrifice was offered for the benefit of someone. To offer the Sacrifice for someone may also mean that we offer it in somebody's name, or in place of some other person. As a Sacrifice of propitiation and impetration Holy Mass has for its special aim the profit and advantage of the person for whom it is offered; for by its power of atonement and intercession it procures for him goods and benefits of all kinds. To these blessings we make reference when we speak of participating in the fruits of the Sacrifice.

253. Among the partakers of these fruits we usually number the following: the whole Church, the sacrificing priest, all those for whom the priest offers the Sacrifice in a special manner, and finally the faithful assisting at Mass. The participation in the fruits of Holy Mass may therefore be fourfold: general, particular, mediate and special. Every time the Holy Sacrifice is offered it obtains its effect and profit for the whole Church, for all the members of the mystic body of Christ who are still in need of the help of grace, be they living or dead. Holy Mass is always the highest act of general homage offered to God by the whole Church. Our Divine Savior left it to her as His most precious legacy, to be her most fruitful source of grace, aid and consolation.

254. This general fruit of the Sacrifice is not granted to all the members of the Church in the same

manner and degree. Those who take a more or less personal part in the sacrificial act and who are therefore in a certain sense co-ordinate ministers of its offering, without doubt receive more abundant blessings not only because of their co-operation in the act of offering, but also in virtue of the divine efficacy of the Sacrifice itself. While the whole Church shares in the general fruit of Mass, its particular fruit is granted to the ministering priest; for as it is he who takes the place of Christ and performs the Sacrifice in His name, it is obvious that a particular fruit should be granted to him. The mediate fruit is gained by those for whom the priest as the representative of Christ offers the Sacrifice in a special manner. It has always been customary in the Church to offer the Holy Sacrifice for the particular intentions of the faithful. Holy Mass is their secure haven of refuge in all their needs and distresses, and hence they have always been most solicitous that Holy Mass should be offered for them and for others in life and after death. Finally, those of the faithful who are present at the celebration of Mass are granted a special fruit. Among the various ways of participating in the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, personal and actual presence at it deserves special mention. Those present in this wise have so much the greater share in its essential fruit, the greater their devotion and purity of heart; and this is their special fruit.

255. More meritorious than to be actually present at Mass is to contribute for the purpose of its celebration. As Holy Mass is an invaluable divine work, and as God is infinitely pleased with its celebration, it is self-evident that we perform a very good work and

obtain the richest graces, if we cause a Holy Mass to be celebrated for ourselves or for others, living or dead. By ordering it we are the cause of its celebration—and the result is, that the adorable Son of God is offered anew to His Heavenly Father; that He is as it were born again for the purpose of renewing this sublime mystery; that this most meritorious Sacrifice is offered up, whereby the Most Holy Trinity receives infinite glory; that the saints in heaven obtain ineffable joy, the Suffering Souls in Purgatory are granted refreshment and release, and all the faithful on earth are so to say flooded with grace and mercy. What gracious return will our Heavenly Father not make to us for causing such infinite joy to the whole celestial court? —Pious Christians who have the means will therefore have a Mass said from time to time for themselves and their families, for this or that intention; and others who have not the means will ask their friends among the priests for charity's sake to say a Mass for their intention. That they do well, no good Christian will dare to deny.

256. It is certain therefore that the giver of an alms for a Holy Mass acquires an ample store of merits by having such a great Sacrifice renewed through his own personal effort. To the Suffering Souls he can cede only that part of these merits which atones for temperal punishments. The greater his participation in the Holy Sacrifice, the more abundant fruit will he receive for himself or the Suffering Souls for whom he caused Mass to be celebrated. If he assists at the Mass which he ordered, his merit is increased; he hastens to the fountain with a larger vessel to receive a more plentiful share of the special

and essential fruit of the Sacrifice. And if he receives holy communion during the Mass, his share of merits will be much greater still. Hence there is in many churches a general monthly communion for the relief of the Suffering Souls during a High Mass ordered by the Poor Souls' Confraternity.

Theologians consider the tree of life which stood in the midst of paradise, "bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of nations" (Apoc. XXII. 2.), as being a symbol of the Most Holy Eucharist. Now, if the Blessed Sacrament is symbolized by the fruits of this tree, it is obvious that this custom of monthly communion must be very praiseworthy and salutary. By Holy Mass and by the application of indulgences the Suffering Souls share not only in the satisfactions of individual persons, but also and in a special manner in the merits of Jesus Christ, procured for them by the agency of the Church, His most pure Spouse; and there can be no doubt that God accepts them. Nevertheless their acceptance is not an unconditional one, but is dependent on the incrutable designs of His Providence, and perhaps also on the zeal which the deceased showed during life in making themselves worthy of this assistance. Yet they always receive great relief and refreshment as often as these spiritual treasures are gained for their benefit.

§ 44. What Formulas does the Church Use in Masses for the Dead?

257. The Church through her priests not only celebrates the Holy Sacrifice of Mass, but joins with it various prayers and ceremonies. True, any formula

of Mass can be used in the celebration of a Mass for the faithful departed; but the Church in her tender maternal solicitude for the Suffering Souls ordained the use of certain formulas which are more efficacious in attaining their object than the Mass of the day. The Roman Missal contains four formulas of Masses for the Dead: one for All Souls' Day; one for the day of death or burial, which is also used with proper orations on the third, seventh and thirtieth day after the death or burial; one for the anniversary of death; and the daily Mass of *Requiem*, which may be said on all days when the rubrics permit it. It is a praiseworthy custom, observed by all good Christians, always to unite a Mass of *Requiem* with the burial service; some even have Masses said for their deceased the day before the burial. The Mass on the third day is intended to remind us of the symbolical meaning of the figure three: on the third day Christ rose from the dead; the departed soul also expects and ardently longs for the coming resurrection; even now we are engaged in praying for its delivery from the abode of purification. The soul is moreover the image of the Tri-une God, and as such is to to purified by the efficacy of the Holy Sacrifice, so that this image may shine forth in full splendor. And lastly, the departed soul incurred guilt in a three-fold manner—by thought, word and deed; against God, the neighbor and self.—The Mass of the seventh day symbolizes the eternal sabbath, the everlasting rest of the departed; hence the Church prays to God that He would in His mercy grant eternal rest to the departed soul by receiving it into the everlasting mansions.—The thirtieth day is observed in imitation of the Israelites who mourned Moses and Aaron for thirty days.

Besides this Christ was baptized in His thirtieth year, and with the thirtieth year we ourselves attain the age of maturity.—And finally, the character of the anniversary Mass is fully expressed in its name: it is the annual remembrance of those who have gone before us, and for whom we implore the sleep of peace.

258. Special mention is to be made of the so-called Gregorian Masses. They have not a formula of their own. They are simply a series of Masses to be said for a departed soul on thirty consecutive days. The origin of this custom is related by St. Gregory the Great as follows: Justus, a monk of St. Gregory's monastery, had retained some money in violation of the established rule. As a punishment for this infraction of the vow of poverty the saint ordered him to be buried in unconsecrated ground. After a time he felt compassion for the poor brother, and asked the Abbot Pretiosus to celebrate Mass for thirty consecutive days for the repose of his soul. As soon as this had been done, the departed monk appeared to Brother Copiosus and informed him of his release from Purgatory. And thus, observes Cavalieri, the custom arose of celebrating the thirty Gregorian Masses. It was sanctioned on the 28th of October, 1628, by the Sacred Congregation of Rites. It is observed in some European countries, and by the Benedictine Order in general.

259. Other ancient customs concerning Masses for the dead are the following: Six or seven Masses are said for the departed soul, thereby to commemorate the mysteries of our Lord's passion; hence they are called the "Passion Masses," or the six or seven "Masses of St. Gregory," who is regarded as the originator of the custom. The first of the Masses is said on

Palm Sunday, to honor the voluntary capture endured by our Savior, and to implore Him to break the bonds of the captive souls in Purgatory. The second is said on the following Tuesday in memory of Christ being sentenced to death; and He is implored to mitigate His rigorous but just punishment of the deceased. The third is said on Wednesday in memory of our Lord's crucifixion; and He is implored by the pangs He suffered while being nailed to the cross to grant relief to the Suffering Souls in their torments. The fourth and fifth are votive Masses during which the Passion of our Lord according to St. John is read. The sixth is said on Holy Saturday in memory of the resurrection of Jesus, to obtain for the Suffering Souls a participation in the triumph and glory of the Redeemer. The seventh Mass commemorates the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to implore her intercession for the souls in Purgatory.

§ 45. On what Days are Requiem Masses Permitted?

260. The use of the formula of the *Requiem* Mass is restricted to certain days. The permission to use this formula depends on the general rules of the Church concerning the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, and on the special privileges granted to certain countries, dioceses and individual priests. Hence a direct and explicit answer to the above question can not be given. All that can be said is, that low Masses of *Requiem* are permitted on many days; that there are few days on which a High Mass of *Requiem* is prohibited; and that High Mass of *Requiem* at burials, with the corpse present, is permitted every day except

on great feasts. If for some adequate reason the corpse cannot be brought to church, for instance on account of the infectious character of the deceased's illness, etc.—then in such a case also the *Requiem* High Mass at burial may be used, the same as if the corpse were present.—For explicit information whether the Mass of *Requiem* can be said on a certain day, let every one apply to his pastor.

261. In virtue of a special privilege some priests have the faculty of saying the Mass of *Requiem* several times a week, which is otherwise contrary to the general rule of the Church.—In the former kingdom of Arragon in Spain, and on the isle of Majorca which belonged to it, there obtains a privilege in virtue of which secular priests are permitted to celebrate two Masses on All Souls' Day, while religious are even allowed to say three. The Dominicans in Pampeluna also have this privilege. Repeated applications to the Holy See to extend this privilege throughout the whole world were answered in the negative. Thus by Pope Urban VIII., Clement IX. and Clement XI.

§ 46. What is Better—to Wait for a Day on which the Mass of Requiem is Permitted, or to have the Mass of the Day Said for the Deceased?

262. It was explained in a former paragraph, that the supplicatory efficacy of the Holy Sacrifice is enhanced by the formula of the Mass, and that the liturgical prayers of these formulas have due reference to the intention for which the Mass is said, in consequence whereof the favor petitioned for is more speedily and surely attained. Such proper formulas

are those of *Requiem*, and such votive Masses as do not correspond with the feast of the day. Every day throughout the year the Church celebrates the memory of some mystery of the faith or of some saint, which feasts have either a proper or a common formula of the Mass. If a *Requiem* or votive Mass is said, the feast must give way to it and accordingly remains unnoticed. In some cases the Church permits this. And because votive and *Requiem* Masses have a greater intercessory power, their celebration is requested often; for instance, the Mass of the Blessed Virgin, of St. Joseph, of the Fourteen Holy Helpers, etc. For the same reason *Requiem* Masses are frequently solicited by the faithful. Now on certain days the Church does not permit the omission of the Mass of the day, and hence arises the question: What is better—to say the Mass of the day for the intention of the person ordering its celebration, or to wait for a day on which the *Requiem* or votive Mass can be said?—The Church herself is our surest guide in answering this question, and her answer is contained in her decrees and ordinances.

263. On the 3d of March, 1761, the S. Congregation of Rites declared that a priest who took upon himself the obligation of saying a votive or *Requiem* Mass, does not fulfil this obligation by saying the Mass of the day, on days when private votive and private *Requiem* Masses are permitted. This must be understood as pertaining to the entire fulfillment of his obligation; for the question concerns not the proper and essential fruit of the Mass, but an incidental one. The precept of saying votive Masses on days when they are permitted binds more strictly than that of saying Masses of *Requiem* on such days.

Hence St. Alphonsus Liguori in his book on the celebration of Mass says, that a priest taking upon himself the obligation of saying a Mass in honor of a certain mystery or saint is by this very act obliged to say the votive Mass. If he can not do so, let him instruct the giver of the stipend to be content with the Mass of the day said for his intention. According to the same holy doctor a Mass ordered in honor of some mystery or saint is to be understood in a strictly liturgical sense, even if the faithful requesting such a Mass do not know the difference between the Mass of the day and a votive Mass. Hence it is obvious that the Church does not consider the celebration of the day's Mass as satisfying the obligation of saying a votive Mass; and therefore the votive Mass must always be said whenever there is an obligation to do so, provided the rubrics permit it to be done.

264. As regards private *Requiem* Masses however, the case is different. On days when they are not permitted, the obligation is fully satisfied by substituting the Mass of the day, as the S. Congregation of Rites has repeatedly declared. For the Church has decided that a priest satisfies his obligation of saying a Mass for the dead when he observes the unprivileged rite of the day, even though a *Requiem* Mass be allowed on that day—provided a *Requiem* Mass has not been expressly asked for, or such a Mass is not required by the one who gave the stipend to gain the indulgence of a privileged altar. (*S. Rit. Congreg.*, 12. Sept., 1840.) The reason why the obligation is fulfilled in the one case and not in the other lies in the fact, that in Masses of *Requiem* regard is had principally to the efficacy of the atonement, which is independent of the rite;

whereas in votive Masses the intercessory fruit is the first object sought to be attained.

265. This being so, a brief consideration of the torments of Purgatory will suffice to answer the question. The soul in the torments of Purgatory is in need of assistance, and Christian charity urges us to come to its aid as soon as possible. True charity permits no delay; it eagerly uses every means at hand to relieve the Suffering Soul; it discerns in Holy Mass a means more efficacious for this end than any other. *Requiem* Masses are more beneficial to the souls in Purgatory than are the Masses of the day because their formulas are expressly arranged for the purpose of assisting them. Nevertheless we should not defer the Holy Sacrifice because a certain day or a certain time does not allow a *Requiem* Mass to be said. If a member of our family or a friend were attacked by illness, would it not be cruel to refuse the application of less effective remedies in case the physician could be called only after some days? Thus also the delay in giving relief to the Suffering Souls is an unpardonable cruelty. Their condition demands speedy relief, and they implore us for it.

266. A Dominican on his death-bed asked one of his friends, a priest, to say a Mass for him immediately after his death. He had scarcely expired, when the priest celebrated the Holy Sacrifice for him. After Mass his deceased friend appeared to him and bitterly complained that he had been obliged to suffer in Purgatory for thirty years. "Thirty years!" replied the priest. "Why, it is scarcely an hour since you died; your corpse is still warm." The deceased answered, "Learn from this, my friend, how painful the torments

of Purgatory are, when suffering them scarcely an hour seems to be thirty years; and therefore have compassion on us."

The torture of the Poor Souls in Purgatory being most intense, it can not be urged too earnestly that we do as speedily as possible what we intend to do for their relief. If charity would prompt us to spend one thousand dollars to release a man imprisoned for debt, and we would pay only one dollar every week, it would take years before he would gain his liberty; but if the whole amount were paid at once, he would be set free immediately. Let us apply the simile. Since the Church has repeatedly declared that a priest satisfies his obligation by saying the Mass of the day instead of a *Requiem* Mass, is it not far better to have many Masses celebrated, either of the day or of *Requiem*, by a great number of priests and at various places, than only one every week, and in one place and by one priest? Undoubtedly it is. We should however always request that the Masses be said as *Requiem* whenever the rubrics permit it.

267. From what has been said on this subject it is obvious how heartless those are who neglect entirely or delay beyond a reasonable time the payment of pious legacies entrusted to them. The learned canonist Reiffenstuel, citing Laymann, Sylvester and other renowned theologians, declares such persons guilty of mortal sin; also those who for the same reason fail to carry out in due time the constitutional provisions of pious associations for the relief of the Suffering Souls. The term of six months granted to testamentary executors by canon law is a privilege exempting from statutory penalties only, not one excusing from sin.

While such an executor or officer of a pious association delays the celebration of Masses or the distribution of alms, the soul of the testator is suffering excruciating torments.

268. Such dilatory heirs and executors are sometimes punished by God even in this world for their neglect, and in the next world the full rigor of divine justice will visit these defrauders of the dead. "Judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy." (James II. 13.)—In the time of Charlemagne a brave warrior, who had fought on all the battlefields of Europe, before dying said to one of his relatives, "My possessions consist solely in my arms and my horse; why then should I make a last will? The arms shall be yours, but sell the horse and divide its price between priests and the poor. Let the former celebrate Masses and the latter pray for me." The relative promised to do so. After the burial he took the horse with the intention of selling it. But as it was of greater value than the arms, he bethought himself that there was nothing to prevent him from keeping it for a while. Perhaps it would bring a higher price after some time which would eventually result to the advantage of his deceased friend. So he used it to make a few journeys: why should it remain idle? he thought. Thus days, weeks and months passed by, and the man no longer remembered his promise. But he was effectually reminded of it. One day the deceased appeared to him and reproved him severely, predicting that he would soon die of a terrible disease and amid excruciating pains, and would have to suffer still greater torments in the next world. A few days later the man fell sick. He called for a priest, whom

he informed of his misdeed and of the apparition, made a sincere and contrite confession and died penitently. There is no doubt that the other part of the prediction came true also, and that he had to suffer the penalty of his neglect.

Let us therefore fulfil our obligations toward the deceased as soon as possible; let us have the Mass of the day said if the rubrics do not permit a *Requiem* Mass. It is a supreme Sacrifice of atonement in whatever form it is celebrated.

§ 47. What is Better—to Found one or more Masses for Our Deceased, or to Devote the Amount to Manual Stipends?

269. "Founding a Mass" means to invest a certain sum of money for the purpose of having a Mass celebrated annually or monthly for all time to come, or for a definite number of years. Manual stipends are alms for Masses to be celebrated for a soul immediately after death.—We find the answer to the above question in Pasqualigo's work on "The Holy Sacrifice of Mass."—Although some are of the opinion that foundations are preferable to manual stipends, this author favors the general opinion of the theologians, which contends that manual stipends should be preferred. He supports this opinion by the doctrine that the atoning fruit for the remission of punishment is always obtained by him for whom the Sacrifice is offered, provided he is capable and well disposed. This is always the case with the Souls in Purgatory. The more Masses are said, and the earlier after death they are said, the more speedily will the soul be released from

Purgatory; hence, as far as the atoning effect comes into consideration, it is preferable to devote the amount to manual stipends. Concerning this matter St. Thomas says, "As pertaining to this question, we must distinguish well between the value which an action has in virtue of the acting person and that which it has of itself. In ordering Masses, whether manual or founded ones, the person ordering receives his reward as soon as the order has been given; but the effect caused by the Mass as such is obtained only when it is offered as a propitiatory Sacrifice. Alms given to the poor for a departed soul move to intercession only after they have been received."

270. Another question, answered by Pasqualigo, must not escape our consideration. It is this: "Are thirty Masses, said on one day, of more benefit to a soul than thirty Masses said on thirty consecutive days?" The answer is: Concerning the atoning effect there is the only difference that in the former case the effect is obtained at once, while in the latter case it is distributed over thirty days. In this case, however, the perseverance in the celebration of the Sacrifice is added to the atonement, and this may undeniably exert some influence with God, the same as prayer would do in such a case; and hence it is possible that thirty consecutive Masses may be sufficient for the release of a soul from Purgatory, while on the contrary they would not have had the same effect without this perseverance. From this it is evident that founded Masses, like manual stipends, are sustained by grave reasons. Although the Suffering Souls receive a more speedy relief by the latter, the former nevertheless have advantages not to be over-

looked. The founding of annual, monthly or weekly Masses for a certain time or forever is very meritorious, because the celebration of Mass for so long a time is an augmentation of divine worship. Besides, the founding of Masses is ever characteristic of devotion and charity, because thereby the service of God is promoted, and poor priests and churches are assisted for a certain time or forever. Hence the theologian Quarti favors such foundations.

271. Other good works may also be founded for the relief of the Suffering Souls; for instance charities, churches, convents, schools, etc. Such foundations are indeed very salutary and beneficial, but care must be taken that they are made in such a manner that the attainment of their effect is rendered morally certain. If the conditions of such foundations are liable to misconstruction, litigations, circumventions, etc., are the result; and no wonder then, that persons become distrustful of exposing their benefactions to such dangers.—There is nothing to offset and ennoble the accumulation of property so much as the bequeathing of it to charitable and humane purposes, provided such bequests be made from supernatural motives.—What is more consoling than to be morally certain that long after our mortal remains have mouldered in the grave, our souls will be refreshed in Purgatory or enjoy their reward in heaven, while our good work for the relief of suffering in this and the next world is still going on?

272. Such foundations are living monuments of which it can truly be said that they are "more durable than brass;" they are lasting by reason of their very nature and object. Monuments in the shape of works

of art receive their value not only from the artist who conceived and fashioned them according to the rule of esthetics, but also from their ethical fitness, as indicating the character of the person to whose memory they were raised. Foundations made in a spirit of Christian charity have for their patron Jesus Christ, who alone can give them a true and everlasting value; they are moral works of art inspired by the Divine Artist who conceived and executed the works of creation and redemption. What, then, can redound more to His honor, than to raise to Him such monuments as Masses, prayers, charities, etc., for the relief of the Suffering Souls? In the religion of Jesus Christ we find the material for such monuments, and His spouse, Holy Mother Church, lends her hand for their execution.

273. What a consolation for a child to have the memory of a dear father, a beloved mother perpetuated by such a monument! When our dear departed relatives, yes, when perhaps we ourselves are already enjoying that supreme bliss which knows no end--may it not be possible that the spiritual monument we founded on earth will continue to glorify God and His Church? and that it will be a consolation for us even in the eternal mansions, as also for our descendants in this vale of tears?

To reach a practical conclusion concerning manual stipends and foundations of Masses, we say: Have as many Masses said for your deceased immediately after their death as your circumstances will allow; then, instead of squandering your money on an extravagant funeral and a costly monument, devote it to make a pious foundation, thereby to obtain the release of your

dear ones from Purgatory, and to aid all the Suffering Souls. Thus you will gain for them the benefit of both kinds of suffrage, and at the same time raise to them and to yourself a truly Christian monument.

§ 48. What is a Privileged Altar?

274. In his book on Indulgences Beringer defines a privileged altar as follows: "A privileged altar is one which is endowed by special favor of the Pope with the privilege of imparting a plenary indulgence to the priest who says Mass there, which indulgence is to be offered by way of suffrage for a soul departed in the state of grace; so that this soul is released from the torments of Purgatory by application of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin and all the saints." This definition is in full accord with a Brief of Pope Pius VI., dated August 30, 1777, in which the grant of such a privilege is explained as follows: "Every time a priest, secular or regular, will celebrate Mass on this altar, we grant to the soul of the departed faithful for whom the Holy Sacrifice is offered an indulgence by way of suffrage, so that the soul is released from the torments of Purgatory by virtue of the treasury of the Church; that is, by application of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin and all the saints."

275. This privilege is local; that is, it is restricted to a certain place, viz. to the altar for which it was granted. The same privilege however may be granted also to a priest personally, and then it is called a personal privilege of the altar. A personal privilege of the altar therefore means that the indulgence is not connected with a certain altar in a certain church, but with the person of the priest; so that a plenary indul-

gence is gained through a Mass said by a priest thus favored as if he had said the Mass at a privileged altar.

To gain such an indulgence the following conditions must be observed:

a) The Mass must be said for the soul of the person to whom we intend to apply the indulgence.

b) The privilege of the altar can be applied only to one soul, even when the Mass is said for several or all the faithful departed.

c) The priest celebrating Mass at a privileged altar, or having the personal privilege of such an altar, may apply the ordinary fruits of the Mass to several souls; but he must single out at least in his mind the soul of a particular person in Purgatory to whom he intends to apply the privilege of the altar, or the indulgence gained by this Mass.

d) On days when it is permitted the priest must say the Mass of *Requiem* in black vestments, when he intends to apply the privilege of the altar to the soul of a deceased person.

276. A difference between the indulgence of a privileged altar and other indulgences applicable to the souls in Purgatory is observable in the fact, that the gaining of the former is surer, because by the privilege of the altar the plenary indulgence is connected with the celebration of Mass, and is not dependent on the state of grace of the priest celebrating, or of the person ordering the Mass. This indulgence is a plenary one; and according to Beringer, it is sufficient of itself to procure to the soul for whom it is applied an immediate release from Purgatory, because the Supreme Pontiff, in virtue of his spiritual power, grants sufficient atonements and merits from out of the treasury

of the Church to cause the release of that particular soul.

Another question is, whether or not this indulgence is applied in every case and in its full extent to the soul for whom it is intended. According to a declaration of the S. Congregation of Indulgences, July 28, 1840, this application is beyond the power of the Church, and depends solely on the mercy of God. Since we can never know whether the indulgence of the privileged altar is obtained to its full extent by the soul to whom we intend to apply it, it is certainly better and more salutary to have several Masses celebrated for our deceased, even if these Masses be said at a privileged altar.

It is strictly forbidden to exact a larger stipend or alms for a Mass connected with the privilege of the altar than is allowed for an ordinary Mass of the same rite. A priest having accepted a stipend with the understanding that the Mass is to be said at a privileged altar is bound in justice to say the Mass at that altar, and to apply it and the indulgence to the soul for whom the stipend was given and accepted. If however the priest has the personal privilege, he may say the Mass at any altar. So the S. Congregation decided February 16, 1852; and this declaration was approved by Pius IX. March 15, 1852.

§ 49. What is Meant by a "Memento"?

277. In Catholic liturgy a *Memento* is the prayer which the priest says in Mass before consecration for such of the living, and after consecration for such of the dead, as were specially recommended to him, or for whom he himself intends to pray in a particular

manner. The first is called the Memento of the Living, the second the Memento of the Dead. At present the priest makes these Mementos in silence; in the early Church the names of the persons to be remembered were read aloud to induce the faithful to unite their intercession with that of the priest. It is still customary with the faithful to ask the priest to remember them or their departed in this manner, or to "request a Memento."

278. *Memento, Domine, famulorum famularumque tuarum N. et N.:* "Remember, O Lord, Thy servants N. and N."—with these words begins the Memento of the Living in the first prayer of the Canon, wherein the priest continues the special intercessions of the Holy Sacrifice. "Remember, O Lord!"—that is, Do not forget them, but regard them with loving care, grant them Thy grace and mercy, protect, favor and bless them.—The letters N. and N. are to remind the priest of those for whom he intends to pray in particular; he may silently pronounce their names, or remember them only in thought. He is at liberty to remember here whomsoever and as many of the living as he wishes. As the prayer of the Church, especially in connection with the Holy Sacrifice, is most efficient and powerful, the zealous priest will not omit to draw copiously on this treasury and to dispense its wealth in favor of all those who are dear to him, and for whom he is bound in justice, charity and gratitude to offer his prayers to God. The pious Memento in Holy Mass draws upon the faithful special divine favors or blessings. Hence it is a great spiritual privilege and favor to be officially remembered in the sacred mysteries; it is a particular and personal presentation of

our needs before the whole court of heaven and at the throne of God. Next to the offering of Holy Mass itself for us and our intentions, a Memento is the greatest intercessory favor a priest can bestow on us.

279. The Holy Sacrifice is to be offered to God in such a manner that He will not refuse its acceptance, but regard it with favor and receive it. This will be the case if God finds in the persons of those offering it nothing to displease Him; if on the contrary they are so pure, holy and immaculate, that they deserve to be included in and offered with the Most Holy Sacrifice of Christ. But our lives are not thus guiltless, our hearts not thus pure, nor is our devotion thus perfect. The Holy Sacrifice itself reminds us of our unworthiness; hence we beseech God to command the gifts on our altar to be carried by the hands of the holy angels to His altar on high. If our gifts are offered to God by angels' hands, they cannot but be pleasing in His sight. Accordingly St. Chrysostom says ("On the Priesthood," VI. 4.): "Angels surround the priest during those solemn moments, and they are joined by the whole heavenly choir; they bow in adoration before Him who is present there as the Victim." And continuing, the saint relates an apparition in which multitudes of angels were seen surrounding the altar, clothed in white garments and bowing in the manner of warriors in presence of their king.—It is the blessed office of the angels to praise and glorify God, and to assist mankind in attaining salvation: where can this twofold object be realized in a more successful manner than at the Holy Sacrifice? At the very time when the angels hover around the altar, the faithful

and their supplications are presented in the Memento to the majesty of God.—What an invaluable favor!

280. As our Sacrifice is carried by angels' hands from our altar to the altar of heaven, and is there united with the worship of the Blessed and brought before the throne of God, it becomes in the truest sense a fountain of living water, flowing from the blessed heights of heaven upon the earth and into the flaming abyss of Purgatory to refresh the languishing children of the Church. Hence the Church feels herself as it were compelled to implore the application of these saving spiritual waters. She remembers in her supplications all her children; and therefore, in the second Memento, she intercedes for the departed souls: "Be mindful, O Lord, of Thy servants N. and N., who are gone before us with the sign of faith, and rest in the sleep of peace." Then particular mention is silently made of such of the dead as the priest intends to pray for; after which he continues: "To these, O Lord, and to all that sleep in Christ, grant, we beseech Thee, a place of refreshment, light and peace. Through the same Christ our Lord."

281. This practice of praying for the faithful departed during the offering of the Holy Sacrifice originated in apostolic times, as is demonstrated in the ancient liturgies and in the writings of the early Fathers. The liturgical Memento of the dead differs variously from that of the living, and is inserted at a different part of the Mass. The latter is made before, the former after consecration. The reason is this: the members of the Church militant can and ought to unite with the priest in offering the Sacrifice to God; and with the Sacrifice they can and ought to make an

offering also of themselves. Of this mention is made in the very words of the Memento. This is more appropriately done before consecration. The faithful departed however can no longer actually join in the celebration of the Sacrifice; they can only gain and enjoy that part of its fruits which we cede to them. Hence it is most appropriate to remember them while the Victim is present on the altar. At this Memento the priest ought to remember some of the departed explicitly and by name to recommend them in particular to the mercy of God. Christ, dying on the cross, bowed His head: "And bowing His head, He gave up the ghost." (John XIX. 30.) Immediately after His death He descended into limbo to console the souls of the just. Of this the Church intends to remind us when she directs the priest by a special rubric to bow his head during this Memento; the priest then intercedes for the faithful departed, imploring that the saving Blood of the Victim may flow into Purgatory to mitigate and lessen the torments of the souls there confined. Therefore we ought to request our friends in the priesthood often to remember our dear departed ones and for this purpose mention their names to them.

§ 50. What is Requisite to Have a Mass Celebrated for the Faithful Departed?

282. On Calvary the source of atonement for mankind was opened, in Holy Mass it flows anew every day. From the Sacrifice of the Mass we can and ought to draw to obtain the favor and mercy of God and the remission of our guilt and its punishment. Of this evil we can be made free by Holy Mass; for by the cleansing laver of the most Precious Blood

our salvation was accomplished. In itself the effect of this most sublime Sacrifice is infinite. If we consider how wicked and culpable before God even the least venial sin and wilful inclination to sin is; if we have a true conception of our misery and weakness, by which we so easily and so often commit venial sins and thereby increase our indebtedness to God; if we remember the painful and prolonged torments of Purgatory; if we contemplate the sufferings and death of our Lord caused by our sins and renewed daily in an unbloody manner in the Holy Sacrifice of Mass—then we will, with the utmost solicitude, improve the gracious hour of this Sacrifice in order to be cleansed in the Blood of the Lamb. How ineffably merciful and good is God, since He renders it so easy for us to receive remission of sin and its punishment in this world, that we might be so much the more speedily admitted to the beatific vision of Christ in the next! Our Lord Jesus Christ suffers Himself to be immolated for you every day on the altar; He sacrifices Himself for your deceased father, mother, relatives and for all the faithful departed. How easy for you to obtain atonement for yourself and all mankind through Holy Mass offered at your request by the priest!

283. There is no doubt that a special fruit is granted to that particular soul for whom the Holy Sacrifice is especially offered. Hence it is an ancient practice of the Church to offer up the Holy Sacrifice for individual persons, living and dead. The contrary doctrine of the Synod of Pistoja was condemned by the Church. The faithful hasten to the altar to have the Holy Sacrifice offered for themselves; but the priests are not bound to celebrate a Mass *gratis*, even

though they may have promised to do so; that is, provided the promise was not really a contract, but only the indication of a kindly disposition. However, they commit a venial sin if such a promise was made in earnest, and a mortal sin if they intended to bind themselves under pain of such a sin. But we need not hesitate to ask them for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, especially if we on our part are ready to obligate them by the reciprocal act of offering a stipend; because if they accept it, they are bound in justice to say the Mass according to the intention of the giver. A priest who omits to say the Mass for which he has accepted a stipend, or who does not provide for its celebration by another, is strictly obliged to make restitution. The acceptance of the stipend by a priest is therefore a sure indication that the Holy Sacrifice will be offered for the intention of the giver.

284. The custom of offering stipends dates back to the earliest centuries, yea, to the very beginning of the Christian era. St. Cyprian reprimands a wealthy woman for coming to Church without bringing an offering. St. Augustine exhorts us "to bring offerings, for whosoever is able to do so and neglects it ought to be ashamed." St. Epiphanias in the fourth century mentions a Jewish rabbi who was baptized, and after baptism gave a large sum of money to the bishop saying: "Offer up the sacrifice for me." In the fifth century the daughter of Theodosius the Great called a certain priest named Barbatian from Rome to Ravenna. As he performed many miracles soon after his arrival, the people placed great confidence in him, and many asked him to say Mass for their intention. Amongst others a man named Julian and a woman by

the name of Theodora each made an offering and asked the saintly priest to say Mass for them; and they received divine help in their troubles. St. Gregory of Tours relates: Oltrogotha, consort of king Gilbert, and who died about the year 558, brought gifts early every morning for the purpose of having Masses said in honor of St. Martin. He also relates: Artallaidas, a daughter of the proconsul Lucius, in 562, offered a number of gold coins on the altar of the Church of the Blessed Virgin, in Benevento, for Masses to be said in honor of our Lord. And again he mentions that many faithful ill of intermittent fever came to the tomb of St. Sigismund, brought gifts to the Church and had Masses said, whereupon they were restored to health. In the seventh century St. John the Almoner, who was made patriarch of Alexandria in 610, one day received a sum of money from a father with the request to say Masses for the safe return of his son from a voyage across the seas. Innumerable other examples might be cited in confirmation of this custom of giving alms or stipends to priests in order that they might say Mass for a certain intention.

285. As every well instructed Catholic knows the inestimable value of the fruits of Holy Mass, there are many devout and zealous persons who frequently give the stipend to have it celebrated. Once in a while it happens that a person requests the priest to offer the Holy Sacrifice without proffering the customary stipend. For such persons as these the fourth Council of Lateran decreed: "Although the sacraments according to the spirit of Christianity are ministered *gratis*, the faithful must nevertheless be requested to

give whatever is sanctioned by custom for such services; and if they refuse to do so, the bishops must enforce this rule by disciplinary correction." But the Church was also careful to preclude all pecuniary speculation by means of the Holy Sacrifice on the part of both the people and the priests; she wished to prevent the former from giving little or nothing on account of avarice, and the latter from making themselves guilty of the crime of simony by reason of the same vice. Hence the bishops were enjoined by the fourth Council of Lateran and by the Council of Trent to fix the amount of alms to be given as a stipend for the services of the priest. If therefore the faithful have occasion to engage the services of a priest, they ought not to ask for instance, "What does a Mass cost?" but, "What should I contribute for the service?" or, "What is the customary alms for the service?" To ask the price or cost of spiritual things indicates a want of religious education; spiritual things are not sold and are not for sale.

286. The alms for the celebration of a Mass, also called a stipend or *honorarium*, is moreover a contribution towards the support of the priest, and is pronounced as such by St. Thomas Aquinas. And St. Augustine writes, "The priests, by whose ministration the faithful receive spiritual benefit, are to receive their support from those whom they serve; but their reward they receive from the Lord." "Know you not," says St. Paul, "that those who work in the holy place, eat the things that are of the holy place; and they who serve the altar, partake with the altar?" (I. Cor. IV. 13.) If therefore one of the faithful requests that the Holy Sacrifice be offered exclusively for his inten-

tion, it is but meet and just that he act according to the injunctions of Holy Scripture and of the Church.

If a priest accepts the stipend for a Mass he pledges himself by this very act to see that the Holy Sacrifice will be offered for the intention of the giver. The stipend must not be regarded as the price or equivalent of Holy Mass; this would be reducing the Holy Sacrifice to a commercial commodity, and would draw down the curse which came upon the sorcerer Simon: "Keep thy money to thyself to perish with thee: because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money." (Acts VII. 20.) Finally the stipend may be regarded as a partial return for the time and care given to the faithful by the priest, not only in ministering to their present spiritual wants, but also for years of study in order to be enabled to render them his services. Hence the stipend or alms for Masses should be given by the faithful to the pastors of their own congregation.

287. If, then, you are earnestly desirous of sharing in this infinite treasury of divine grace, you will see from the preceding remarks that access to it is easy and open to all. God's mercy is ever ready to fill us with heavenly gifts and blessings; would that we also were always anxious and ready to receive them! If we but made use of these graces conferred for our benefit, how rich in merit we soon would be! We could thereby release from their torments innumerable souls in Purgatory. But our hearts are attached to the transitory things of this world; we prefer them to things heavenly. We are deplorably negligent in the service of Christ, despite the fact that He is our only hope of salvation, our Sanctifier and

Redeemer, the consolation of all wayfarers on earth and of the Blessed in heaven. How dreadful to think that so many have no regard for this saving mystery, which is the joy of Heaven, the hope of Purgatory, and the salvation of the world! Incomprehensible blindness and callousness of the human heart, to slight so ineffable a gift, and to be led by its daily occurrence to regard it with indifference!

§ 51. Is there a Special Fruit Derived from Masses Celebrated in Gratitude towards Benefactors?

288. Sin having entered this world and laid a heavy burden on us exiled children of Eve, the predominant religious sentiment of the soul is a craving for pardon, reconciliation and atonement. "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy, and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my iniquities." (Ps. L. 34.) This cry ascends to heaven from the heart of sinful man desirous of reconciliation; and it finds its truest expression in sacrifice. Hence sacrifices of propitiation were the most numerous and conspicuous of the Old Law. Holy Mass, as being the consummation of all pre-Christian sacrifices, embraces all ends for which sacrifice is instituted, and must consequently also be a sacrifice of propitiation. In this respect the truth and essence of the New Law can not be inferior to the type and shadow of the Old Law. What was achieved on the cross for all mankind is applied in Holy Mass to individuals; for it is both a sacrifice of atonement and of impetration. Hence fervent Christians are intent on assisting at Mass as often as possible, and on having

it offered for themselves and for others; they moreover improve every opportunity to gain a special share in the various Masses said for confraternities, societies, sodalities, etc., and offer the atonement merited thereby in favor of particular persons. Such societies are the Pious Union of Masses in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Ingolstadt, Bavaria, for the members of which about 250,000 Masses are said every year, and in which they share if they order a Mass annually and observe the other rules of the Union. The "Work of Atonement," called also the "Charity," is a society for the relief of the Suffering Souls, for whom it has 50,000 Masses said every year. There are a great number of such pious associations.

289. Besides, there are other good works that engage the charity of the faithful, for instance the support of home and foreign missions, the conversion of unbelievers, the maintenance of hospitals and charitable asylums, etc. The founders and directors of such pious works for the relief of spiritual and temporal distress generally show their gratitude towards their benefactors by saying Masses or having Masses said for them. What better return could these godly persons make to their benefactors than to offer up for them the Holy Sacrifice of Mass, this inexhaustible source of grace? In our country there are many such institutions—asylums for homeless children, hospitals, colleges and seminaries for poor students etc.—for the charitable support of which a specified number of Masses are said every year.

290. In many confraternities, societies, etc., the members are very zealous to share in the spiritual benefits accorded to them by the Church. These benefits

are very numerous. For instance: The members of the "Work of Atonement," during life and after death, share in all the meritorious works of the Augustinians, Carmelites, Dominicans, Franciscans, Redemptorists, and Trinitarians in all their branches.—The members of the Confraternity of the Scapular of Mount Carmel, according to the Bull *Ex clementi*, of August 12, 1530, share in all the prayers and good works of the Carmelite Order.—The members of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ have a special share in all the good works and penitential exercises of all religious Orders and Congregations. (Rescript of September 20, 1852.) Moreover, the Holy See granted to these pious unions a great number of plenary and partial indulgences to be gained by the members on fulfilment of the conditions prescribed. Hence thousands upon thousands have united and still continue to unite themselves with these aggregations for the purpose of sharing in their merits.

291. By the communion of saints every member of the Church, when in the state of grace, partakes of all the spiritual benefits of the whole Church and every other member. Our spiritual advantage common to all members of the Church is faith. Faith itself has its source in the superabundant and infinite merits of Christ. To the merits of Christ are added the merits of the saints, who as living members of the mystical body of Christ often gained more merits by their labors and sufferings than were sufficient for themselves. True, their merits are limited and cannot be compared with the merits of Christ in whom they originate and who gives them their value; nevertheless they are an addition to His merits. These merits,

which they gained over and above their own needs, are placed to the credit of the faithful on earth for themselves and the souls in Purgatory; not indeed in such a manner that the sanctity of the saints may be shared in by the faithful living in this world—for no individual can be good and holy for another—but in such a way, that the superfluous merits of the saints are ceded to the faithful on earth for the partial or entire remission of their own temporal punishments, or those of the Suffering Souls. The infinite merits of Jesus Christ and the supererogatory merits of the saints, taken collectively, form the spiritual treasury of the Church.

292. The communion of the faithful on earth imparts this advantage to the members thereof, that all who are in a state of grace share in all the Masses, prayers and good works which every one individually offers and performs. The faithful on earth therefore participate in all the spiritual goods of the Church, which derive their efficacy directly or indirectly from the merits of Jesus Christ and the saints. They all hear the preaching of the word of God, and are led on toward heaven by the priests, the representatives of the Good Shepherd; they have access to the holy sacraments, the conduits of heavenly grace; they receive by means of indulgences the partial or full remission of temporal punishment, and through the sacramentals various benefits for soul and body; they share in the prayers of the Church, and especially in all the Holy Masses celebrated every day throughout the whole world. What a wealth of treasures, Christian soul, treasures far surpassing in value the whole world with all its perishable goods!

293. But this is not all. The faithful on earth share also in the prayers and good works which they perform and offer up for one another individually. For instance, a friend many miles away prays that God would grant you such and such a grace; another gives an alms with the intention that God should let you have its merit. God hears them both. He may not grant you the grace implored, but He will give you one far more salutary for you. Since the day when St. James wrote the words, "Pray one for another, that you may be saved, for the continual prayer of a just man availeth much" (James v. 16.)—since that day there always have been devout souls who made the general needs of Christendom the object of their special intercession. Thousands upon thousands pray for the young people, that they may not be misled; for the rich, that they may make good use of their wealth; for the sick, that they may profit by the visitation of God. Half a million priests daily recite their canonical office for the whole Church; there are confraternities for the assistance of the dying by prayer and good works; the convents that practise the Perpetual Adoration day and night implore divine mercy for the welfare of the whole Church. In all these prayers and works of individual piety and charity the faithful at large have a share.

294. Sinners also profit by the communion of saints; for sin does not wholly exclude from it, because by sin we do not lose faith and hope, but only charity. But the spiritual benefits conferred on sinners through the communion of saints are restricted to the means and graces of conversion placed at their disposal. Excluded from the communion of saints are all those

who do not belong to the Church, unbelievers, heretics, schismatics and excommunicated persons. The Church preaches and prays for them; but if they continue in separation, she cannot grant them further benefits; she must leave them to their fate. For the salvation of sinners within the pale of the Church the faithful offer up prayers and good works to obtain their conversion. The Church herself continues to exhort them, inviting them to reconciliation with God by the sacrament of Penance. She also prays for them, and offers for them the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

295. It is therefore the will of Christ and of the Church, that the Holy Sacrifice should always include the whole communion of the faithful. The general fruit of the Sacrifice is awarded to them by the very act of sacrifice performed by the priest, and hence a formal intention on his part is not necessary. Those who are excluded from the communion of saints have no share whatever in the general fruit of Sacrifice. Those who are in a state of mortal sin partake of these fruits in a less degree than the just who are full members of the mystical body of Christ; for Holy Mass always produces its effect for the benefit of the whole Church, for all still in need of the help of grace, living or dead. The chalice of the Precious Blood of Sacrifice is daily lifted heavenward for the salvation of all. Jesus Christ shed His Blood and suffered the torments of the cross in order that all mankind might receive the knowledge of the truth and be saved by His grace and atonement. The source of grace and salvation flows incessantly and everywhere in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and dispenses blessings to all the world. Into thousands of hearts—hearts that are perhaps not

even aware of it—the rays of supernatural illumination go out from the altar, to lead back to Christ, the great Bishop and Shepherd of souls, the erring sheep of His flock; to bring them back into the one fold, to the bosom of their Mother the Church, where the treasures of grace and the means to draw therefrom are open to all.

296. The more the faithful endeavor by virtue and piety to render themselves capable of receiving these treasures; the more closely they unite their own prayer with the prayer of their brethren on earth, with that of the Church, and with the Holy Sacrifice: the more abundant will be their share in the general fruits of the Sacrifice. For this reason good Christians every morning renew the intention to share in all the Masses celebrated throughout the world, which pious practice is a most salutary one and greatly to be commended; for thereby they draw down on themselves the effects and fruits of this Holy Sacrifice. We remarked before that the general fruit of prayer and of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, whether offered by the faithful at large or by the Church, is not granted equally and in like manner to all the members of the Church militant. Some receive a greater, some a smaller share, every one according to his disposition. Hence it would be wrong to remain placidly inactive, thinking to have one's own indifference repaired by the zeal of others. Whosoever wishes to share in the benefits accruing to us from the communion of saints, must diligently perform his part in working out his salvation.

297. Those of the faithful who co-operate proximately or even remotely in the celebration of the Holy

Sacrifice and in the prayers of a confraternity or society, undoubtedly receive a share of heavenly blessings proportionate to their co-operation, not only by reason of the act and spiritual condition of the persons sacrificing and praying, but also in virtue of the essential efficacy of the Sacrifice and prayer. These graces and blessings gained through the personal exertion of the faithful is sometimes called the special fruit in contra-distinction to the general fruit. Such special fruit is acquired for instance by members of Mass Associations, confraternities, etc. Through a special privilege granted by various Popes they also share in all the merits gained by the good works of the Orders and confraternities of the Church, and this not merely in an equal degree with all the faithful in general, but in a particular and much higher degree.

Consider now, O Christian soul, how numerous and manifold are the good works performed by all the confraternities throughout the world, and remember that by being a member of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood you share in all of these good works, the same and as much as if you were really a member also of all the other confraternities. And besides this, remember, you have a special share also in all the other good works performed by the faithful in general—prayers, penitential exercises, Holy Masses, works of charity, etc.,—as is evinced and confirmed by the Bulls and Rescripts of the Supreme Pontiffs.

298. To gratify their sensual desires, the rich of this world search all the countries of the earth for treasures that are vain and perishable. Should not we in like manner strive to gather the spiritual treas-

ures of merit flowing into the Catholic Church from all parts of the earth? The holy zeal of missionaries in the remotest quarters of the globe; the penitential exercises of saints everywhere; the ardent aspirations of pious souls in strict retirement; the thousands and thousands of Holy Masses said every day—behold, all these contain priceless treasures of merit in which we can share and whereby we can enrich our souls. And having thus enriched ourselves, we can cede these blessings to others. Parents can give them to their children, husbands to their wives, wives to their husbands, and friends to friends; so we can favor one another with gifts of inestimable value. By our prayer of intercession we can exert an incalculable influence on the affairs of the world, without ever leaving the humble sphere of our daily avocations; and thereby we contribute very greatly to promote the public welfare.

Holy Mass is the most efficacious means of drawing upon ourselves and upon others the fulness of spiritual and temporal blessings. Being members of the communion of saints, we can share these blessings with others; and therefore thousands, yea, millions of the faithful have organized unions for the purpose of having Masses celebrated. Every one contributes his mite, and so he has a relative share in the many Masses that are celebrated for the various intentions of the members—for the conversion of sinners, for a sick member of some family, for the success of some undertaking, etc., or also for every member's particular intention, either made privately or sent in writing to the respective directors together with the contribution. Such persons then receive a special share in these Masses, a share larger than that of the faithful generally

in virtue of the communion of saints. The participation in the fruits of these Masses depends for its magnitude on the co-operation, capability and devout disposition of the member.

299. We remarked before that both the givers as well as the recipients of a charity can mutually assist one another by prayer, by good works, and by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The directors of such charitable institutions do not collect money by promising the celebration of Masses, but they earn it honestly by their publications, the proceeds of which they devote to the education of their wards. The Masses they cause to be celebrated and the prayers which they engage to have said for their benefactors are an expression of their gratitude. These benefactors may be subscribers to the papers that are published by these institutions, or they may not be subscribers; to become benefactors and to share in the Masses and prayers, they must contribute a certain sum of money to the good work, for which they receive in return the publications that are issued. For greater gifts God Himself becomes their debtor. The benefactors of such institutions know this very well, or at least they might know it.

The recipients of charity offer up their prayers for their benefactors, imploring God to bless them here and hereafter, and to grant them for their salvation what they ask of Him; and for this same intention the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered a certain number of times. The benefactors therefore receive a special fruit from these prayers and Masses, in addition to the general fruit received with the faithful generally in virtue of the communion of saints.—The fruit which is imparted to those for whom the priest celebrates

Mass specially is called the ministerial or mediate fruit, as was observed in a former paragraph.

300. Inasmuch as the priest is one of the "ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God" (I. Cor. IV. 1.), it is not only part of his faculty to celebrate the Sacrifice, but also to determine who shall receive its fruit. The celebrant of the Mass is at liberty to dispose of the mediate fruit for his own benefit, or for the benefit of others; that is, it belongs to him alone to designate the persons that shall be specially benefitted by his Mass. The learned writer Pasqualigo says, "We maintain that it is the office of the minister to apply the fruits of the Sacrifice, so that he may apply to one a greater share of these fruits than he does to another. This is what is meant by the expression 'to apply the Mass'." The right and faculty of applying the Mass for the benefit of others is irrevocably imparted to the priest in his ordination. The duty of making this application may arise from various causes, as was explained before. It is beyond doubt that a special application of the fruit of the Sacrifice is permitted, profitable and salutary; for this is not only inherent in the nature of the Sacrifice itself, but is also the explicit doctrine of the Church, supported by her ancient and universal practice. The assertion, that no special benefit is derived from the special application of Mass to a certain person or to a certain class of persons, was condemned by the Church. (Constit. *Auctorum fidei*, Aug. 28, 1794.)

301. The mediate application of the fruit of the Sacrifice being exclusively an act of the sacerdotal power obtained in ordination, it can be made *validly* for all who are capable and in need of it; to be made

lawfully, the decrees of the Church regulating such application must be observed. According to the will of Christ the Eucharistic Sacrifice is the property of the Church; He ordained that it should be offered in and by her. Therefore it belongs to the supreme authority of the Church to order and restrict the priest's faculty of making the application. Holy Mass can be celebrated for all the members of the Church, whether they be in the state of grace or not. The just alone are qualified to receive the fruit of the Sacrifice to its whole extent; because the more intimately one lives in communion with Christ and the Church, the greater will be his participation in the fruits of the Sacrifice. The fruit of the Sacrifice is communicated also to those who are in the state of mortal sin; but they share in it far less abundantly. Above all Holy Mass may bring about their reconciliation with God, His mercy granting them light and strength to turn away from sin and to be replenished with grace. The salutary and saving effects of Holy Mass extend even beyond the grave, namely to the souls in Purgatory. Only those who incurred major excommunication are excluded from the Sacrifice; for the priest is strictly prohibited from applying it to any person thus excommunicated.

302. The receivers of charity can therefore apply the Holy Sacrifice especially for their benefactors, as long as the latter are not subject to excommunication. It was already observed that the selection of the persons for whom the priest wishes to apply Mass is left exclusively to him. He may remember in it the living and the dead, without regard to number and condition. Benefactors are remembered as a spe-

cial class in the Holy Sacrifice which is offered for them. They receive a share in the general fruit of the Mass, because like the rest of the faithful they are members of the communion of saints; and in addition to this they obtain a special share in virtue of their good work of alms-giving and through the application of Holy Mass made especially for them. The priest may find it impossible to remember the benefactors all by name, as the *Memento* is not to be protracted beyond a reasonable time; but he makes a more explicit *Memento* of them before Mass, which he renews briefly at the proper time during the celebration at the altar, when he remembers them in general as a special class of persons. This mode of procedure does not diminish in the least their special fruit of the Sacrifice. The faithful are aware of this, and hence they are anxious to contribute to such unions of Masses or other good works. To participate in the special graces of Holy Mass they excel in good works, because God rewards in a special manner every good work performed by man. They are convinced that the best means a Christian can make use of to share in the blessings of Holy Mass is to give alms for its celebration.

303. There may be a considerable number of Christians who are led by a wrong view in contributing to such unions of Masses or charitable institutions. Being deficient in the knowledge of their religion, they contribute a certain small sum of money with the view of obtaining an ample return of spiritual benefits for their slender contribution. They pay an almost insignificant sum of money in order to have a share in a large number of Masses; and some even imagine that by doing so they are satisfying their ob-

ligation of having a certain number of Masses celebrated, without paying the stipends as ordinarily prescribed. For so small a contribution they share in such a large number of Masses—a great many more than they are bound to have celebrated! They desire the largest possible return for the smallest possible contribution. They show thereby that they are both avaricious and niggardly. There is no doubt that such persons are guilty of simony, because they try to set a price on the Holy Sacrifice—the lowest price possible. Their contribution cannot be considered as an alms, because they speculate on a return for their money, because they desire and expect to receive more for their small contribution, than by contributing the alms or stipend fixed by the bishop. Persons acting in this wise grossly deceive themselves. If anyone calculates on receiving more spiritual benefit for a dollar at one place than at another—what else can this be called but reducing spiritual goods to a commodity? Moreover, how badly distorted must be the religious views of a person who imagines that he can gain God's blessing by covetousness and avarice!

304. This culpable and usurious practice of trying to obtain spiritual goods by purchase or commercial transaction is a most detestable crime. In ecclesiastical parlance it is called simony, from Simon Magus, of whom we read in the Acts of the Apostles: "And when Simon saw that by the imposition of the hand of the Apostles the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I shall lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said to him: Keep thy money to thyself to perish with thee: because thou hast

thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast no part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Do penance therefore for this thy wickedness, and pray to God, if perhaps this thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee. For I see thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity." (Acts VIII, 18—23.) Persons attempting to fulfil their duty towards their deceased by joining unions of Masses and confraternities in order to receive a great number of Masses for the least possible money, would be guilty of this vice of simony. If deceased persons have willed certain sums of money for Masses, and the heirs would send this money to Europe or elsewhere for the purpose of having *more* Masses said than they could procure for the same amount of money at home—that also would be simony; and if they would send away only just enough of the money to have the *required* number of Masses said, and this for the purpose of saving and keeping some of the money for themselves—this would not only be an outrage, but also a defraudation of the dead; and consequently such heirs, in this latter case, would be obliged to make restitution. And whosoever attempts to influence a priest to accept a lower stipend than the one fixed by diocesan statute, makes himself guilty of simony.

305. But not only the attempt to purchase spiritual things for a temporal price is spiritual usury, but also the attempt to sell them is a great crime; for things spiritual are desecrated and debased by being bartered for things temporal. Nevertheless there were cases in which this was done. To collect money for the building of churches, or for other purposes good

in themselves, a certain number of Masses was promised for those who would contribute a certain sum. The Second and Third Plenary Councils of Baltimore vigorously condemned this practice. In the Acts of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, page 169, number 269, we read: "It is to be deplored that the Decree number 370, issued by our Venerable Predecessors in the last Plenary Council was in many cases not observed. We now declare again and again, that it is an intolerable abuse and a desecration of a sacred purpose that Masses are announced in newspapers and circulars to be said for such as contribute money to the building of churches, convents or similar edifices, for the purpose of paying off the debts thereof, or for any other good purpose. We most strongly condemn and prohibit this abuse. We urge bishops and prelates to have the said abuse corrected where it is still practiced and to render it impossible for the future." It is plain from these words of the Council, that all promising of Masses for the purpose of collecting money, offering a purely spiritual good for money or its equivalent, is prohibited and therefore sinful.

306. Every good Catholic will abhor such a scandalous proceeding and resolve never to be guilty of it. The best way to avoid it is always to have in one's heart a great reverence for God and for everything consecrated to His service. A person imbued with this reverence will show it by his whole demeanor. When he assists at Mass he indicates by his reverential bearing that he is conversing with God, His Redeemer, Lord and Judge. He manifests his faith also by having Masses celebrated for his intention by his own pastor; for he judges rightly that the

fruits of a Mass are granted in proportion to the number of persons for whom it is said. Nevertheless he is eager also to gain a special share of other Masses and good works by a faithful and active membership in pious confraternities and societies. He is particularly careful to avoid every sin against the reverence due to God. Whosoever perseveres in the grace of God shares in all the good works performed in the Church of God; and this participation corresponds in measure with the zeal personally shown in the performance of such works. He avoids the dreadful crime of spiritual usury and is solicitous to fulfill the will of God in all things.

307. What an ineffable blessing to be a faithful, true and obedient child of the Church and in living communion with Christ! Those members of the Church militant, who preserve in their souls the life of grace, can acquire the full share of inexhaustible blessings and mercies inherent in the innumerable Masses celebrated every day throughout the world. And how consoling the thought: "If I should die even in the remotest corner of the earth, if I should be forgotten by all the world, our Holy Church will not forget me. She will pray and offer the Holy Sacrifice on thousands and thousands of altars for my poor soul; and so she will pour the Most Precious Blood of Atonement into the flames of Purgatory for the alleviation and lessening of punishment." This is an inestimable, undeserved privilege for which we ought to be most grateful to God. At the same time we ought to praise and glorify God's mercy for ordaining that one person may atone for the other; and particularly ought we to be thankful that He gave us in Holy Mass so excellent and efficient a means to assist

one another in this world, and to come to the relief of the Suffering Souls in their banishment and torments. Holy Mass is indeed a spiritual treasury, to which we are permitted to have recourse at all times. But where is our faith and love? Most assuredly we have reason to repent of much, to repair a great deal!

308. The Annals of the Society of Jesus relate that in 1583, at Biturka, a heretical mother was nursing her child, when suddenly the infant exclaimed, "To Holy Mass! To Holy Mass!" Full of consternation the mother obeyed the call; and while assisting at Mass and hearing the announcement of the word of God, she was enlightened by grace so that she abjured her errors and became a fervent Catholic. Are not many amongst us in the same deplorable state in which this mother had been? Do we esteem sufficiently the great source of grace that is open to us in Holy Mass? Is the sacred, blessed hour of the Holy Sacrifice the favorite and most cherished part of our time? Do we regard the celebration of and assistance at Mass as the most supreme and important work of the day? Consider, O Christian soul: "Jonas arose and went to Ninive according to the word of the Lord. . . And the men of Ninive believed in God, and they proclaimed a fast. . . And God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil way: and God had mercy with regard to the evil which He had said that He would do to them, and He did it not." (Jon. III.) When Solomon had finished the temple, "the Lord appeared to him by night, and said: I have heard thy prayer, and I have chosen this place to Myself for a house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven, and there fall no rain, and if I give orders, and command the locust to devour the land, or if I send

pestilence among My people: and My people, upon whom My name is called, being converted, shall make supplication to Me, and seek out My face, and do penance for their most wicked ways: then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and will heal this land." (II. Paralip. VII. 12—14.) Therefore, heed you also the call, "To Mass! To Mass!" Let the sound of the bell remind you of that infant's call "To Mass!" If you hasten to it with interior and exterior devotion, the grace of God for soul and body, blessings and favors in abundance will descend upon you from on high. As often as the Lord, by His sacred ministers, invites you to contribute your share to the Holy Sacrifice, do so willingly and generously, in order that God may give to all of us, and particularly to lukewarm and impenitent Christians, the grace of conversion, penance and justification. Be convinced that in virtue of the communion of saints you share not only in the general fruits of Holy Mass, and in the prayers of the Church—all Catholics do so, even if they do not perform special good work for the purpose; but also in all the particular and specific fruits of the Holy Sacrifice that are common to all members in virtue of their special good works. "To Mass!" Hasten to offer the true propitiatory Sacrifice for the faithful departed, who cry from the depth of Purgatory: "Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends, because the hand of the Lord hath touched me." (Job XIX. 24.) "To Mass!"—that God may be moved to release our deceased parents, brothers, sisters, relatives and friends from their torments by the power of this Holy Sacrifice, than which there is no more efficacious means of help.

CHAPTER IV.

On the Motives for Helping the Suffering Souls.

§ 52. General Motives for Helping the Suffering Souls.

309. The joyous strains of the second Vespers of All Saints are hushed; the festive ornaments of the altar are removed; a catafalque is erected in its front. In black vestments the priest intones the Vespers of the dead.—Has the cold hand of Death removed a dear member from the midst of the congregation? Is it a burial for which these preparations are made? No; it is the eve of All Souls' day, the day on which the Church in maternal charity remembers in her prayers and in the Holy Sacrifice all those of her children who have passed through the portals of eternity, but who were not found pure enough to rest on the Sacred Bosom of their Lord; who are not yet permitted to stand before the throne of the Lamb, to take possession of the realms of bliss, but are detained in the debtors' prison to await their ransom, their release and admission to eternal glory. Thousands of faithful obey the call of Mother Church, and thoughtfully, sadly wend their way to divine service to remember the dead.

310. During our earthly pilgrimage we are often disquieted—not only by the thought, what shall we eat, what shall we drink, and wherewith shall we clothe ourselves, but also by solicitude for the welfare

of our dear ones in the distance. Who of us has not observed the furrowed brow of a father, the scalding tears of a mother, when a dear son or daughter takes leave of them to seek a way to fortune in the world? How will their children fare? What will happen to them? Will they remain steadfast in their faith, and avoid the snares of sin, the influence of bad company? Such are the thoughts that daily harass the fond parent's heart. —And the children also may have to bear a heavy burden of mental trouble. When long silence on the part of their parents fills them with vague apprehensions for their safety, they are continually worried by the thought, "Why do they not write? Are they still alive and well? Are they perhaps sinking under the weight of advancing age?"—These are their thoughts day and night; they follow them to their work and intrude themselves into their prayers.

311. But the solicitude for our dear ones reaches its highest point when our thoughts are directed to the condition of their souls in the other world. Our hearts are troubled, our minds feel oppressed when confronted with the question, "My father, mother, son, daughter, sister, brother has passed the confines of mortal life: in what state may their souls be in the world beyond? What was the sentence they received at the tribunal of the Supreme Judge? Is reward or punishment their lot?"—Holy Writ informs us that nothing defiled can enter heaven, and that even the just man falls seven times a day; are then our beloved ones in eternal torment?—The heart recoils at the terrible thought!

312. Harassed by such doubts, a fond mother continued day and night to mourn the early death of

a beloved son. But with all her tears it never occurred to her to come to the relief of his soul. It pleased our Lord to show her in a vision the wrong she thereby committed. She saw a procession of youths who joyously wended their way towards a beautiful city. With straining eyes she sought her son among them, and finally discovered him plodding along dejectedly in the rear, impeded in his progress by the heavy folds of a wet garment clinging about him. Mournfully addressing her, he said, "Dear mother, this garment, which your tears have made so heavy, hinders me from keeping pace with my companions. Oh, cease your weeping; and if you really love me, assist me with prayer, alms, Holy Mass and other good works!"

313. Henschenius, in his life of St. Dionysius the Carthusian, also relates an instance of the impropriety of immoderate inquisitiveness concerning the state of the deceased. When this saint was informed of his father's death, he sincerely mourned the deceased. At the same time, being anxious concerning his condition in the other world, he resolved to implore God to inform him of it. One day after Vespers, when he was devoutly engaged in prayer for this purpose, he heard a voice from heaven, saying, "What does it profit thee that thou shouldst permit thyself thus to be led on by curiosity? Much better would it be if, instead of praying to know the state of thy father's soul, thou wouldst pray for his release from Purgatory in case he should be there. Thus thy prayer would be of assistance to him and thou wouldst gain merit thereby." Very much confounded at this reproof he thenceforth devoted himself with redoubled zeal to prayer for his

father's release; and the very next night he saw him in terrible torments, calling on him for help. He continued offering his prayers and good works for him, till he had the consolation of being informed of his release. Moreover, from this time on he was an ardent helper of the Suffering Souls, and exhorted his brethren also to come to their relief.

314. These are private revelations concerning particular cases.—But who will tell *us* what became of our dear ones, who departed this life with so many frailties? Our Holy Church consolingly responds to this inquiry: Mourn not as those who have no hope; for there is a middle state between heaven and hell, a place of purification, where according to St. Augustine all those receive salvation as if by fire, who have not sufficiently atoned for their sins. And Holy Scripture corroborates her comforting doctrine by assuring us that "it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins" (II Mach. xx. 46), "for the continual prayer of the just man availeth much" (James v. 16.), and "if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you." (John xvi. 23.) Like an angel of consolation Holy Church assuages our grief, saying, "Why mourn as those who have no hope? If you desire that your loved ones enter the glory of heaven, why do you not aid them to attain it by alms-deeds, fasting, the Holy Sacrifice and other good works? These are prices of ransom acceptable to God and a most powerful means of effecting their release."—"And making a gathering, he (Judas the Machabee) sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead." (II Mach. xii. 43.)

And the aged Tobias exhorted his son: "Lay out thy bread and thy wine upon the burial of a just man," for "alms deliver from all sin and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness." (Tob. IV. 11.)—And listen also to St. Ambrose, writing to Faustinus, a nobleman who incessantly mourned the death of his sister, "Cease your mourning. The Lord, in whose hand is life and death, deprived you for a short time of your dearly beloved sister. Do not weep for her. Rather pray for her that the Lord may deliver her from the torments of Purgatory. Enwreathe her with immortelles of good works and with a garland of the roses of prayer. This is the most beautiful tribute you can pay to her memory."

315. While the Church thus consoles us by her ancient faith and her scriptural doctrine concerning those that died in the Lord, but who at their death had not yet cancelled all their indebtedness "to the last farthing," a mistaken zeal for the glory of God may induce some to oppose prayer for the Suffering Souls. The sentiment by which such persons are led may be expressed in the following words: "As these just souls are sure of their salvation and confirmed in the love of God, it is much more meritorious to labor for the glory of God by fostering the propagation of the faith, by a fervent devotion to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, by praying for the conversion of sinners, etc., than by striving to obtain a speedy release for the Suffering Souls." But this is not so. With Faber most theological writers maintain, that of all works of mercy and charity the most exalted, pure and charitable is to aid the Suffering Souls in Purgatory.

316. We read in the Annals of the Dominican Order that a disciple of the great St. Dominic, a man of high virtue, was remiss in his prayer for the souls in Purgatory. "Why trouble ourselves about their state?" he said. "They are sure of their salvation; they are no longer in danger of losing heaven. I will rather labor for the conversion of sinners, to lead back to God souls whose salvation is still in peril, whose damnation is humanly speaking inevitable because of their obduracy of heart and depravity of mind. Hence I pray for these unfortunates; I offer for them the Holy Sacrifice of Mass; I do everything in my power for them—and I do not doubt that I shall succeed." This line of reasoning is surely not logical; it rather betokens great simplicity. And yet the good Dominican imagined that it was not enough for him alone to act according to this principle; but he sought also to influence others to follow his example. Under the vain pretense of applying his charity to a better purpose he deprived the Suffering Souls of the suffrages by which devout Christians would have willingly aided them.

317. But in this case God allowed the Suffering Souls to leave their prison and to appear in menacing attitudes to the one who had thus defrauded them; for it is God Himself, who in His inscrutable mercy and justice created Purgatory, and who wishes the living to come to the relief of the departed. The souls began to molest the Dominican everywhere and at all times, filling him with terror, announcing to him who they were and why God permitted them to annoy him. Soon the good religious was a changed man; and thenceforth he was filled with such charity for the

Suffering Souls that he was most assiduous in his prayers for their relief. He offered the Holy Sacrifice for them as often as possible, and exhorted others in powerful sermons to help them. Never before were motives inculcated so effectually in defense of suffrages for the departed souls; and his success in convincing his hearers fully atoned for his former error.

318. History has not transmitted to us the arguments by which this zealous religious defended charity towards the Suffering Souls. Catholic theologians gather them from the angelic doctor St. Thomas, and from other great saints and doctors of the Church. They deduce the various motives for helping the Poor Souls from the very nature of this sublime charity; and accordingly they enumerate three classes of such motives—motives relating to ourselves, to God, and to the Suffering Souls. By a careful consideration of these motives we shall be led to esteem at their true value the exertions of fervent Catholics for the Suffering Souls; we shall refresh in our minds the memory of the departed; we shall feel impelled to greater exertions for their relief. These motives are to say to us repeatedly and with irresistible force: "Hasten to aid the Church Suffering, the souls in Purgatory!" For St. Chrysostom remarks, "It was so ordained by the Holy Ghost, who demands of us that we help them."—Let us therefore make use of the effective means at our command, consisting of prayer, good works and Holy Mass. Let us never cease to implore our good God, the King of glory, to release from their torments the Suffering Souls, and to make them members of the Church triumphant, together with all the saints in eternal bliss.

§ 53. Motives Relating to God.

319. One man has a strong affection for another. How will he show it? He will strive always and everywhere to please his friend, to gladden his friend's heart; he will endeavor to influence others that they also may love, praise and honor the person whom he himself loves. The same may be said as regards our love for God. If we truly love God, we will prove our love by being eager to do whatever we know is pleasing to Him; we will strive to promote His glory to the best of our ability. It was thus our Divine Savior Himself manifested His infinite love for His Heavenly Father; for He said, "I do always the things that please Him." (John VIII. 29.) And again, "The works that I do in the name of My Father, they give testimony for Me." (John X. 55.)—The purpose for which man was created is this: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole soul." (Matth. XXVII. 17.)—In the Book of Proverbs we read, "The Lord hath made all things for Himself." (Prov. XVI. 4.) The Lord Himself, through His prophet, says of man, "I have created him for My glory." (Isai. XLIII. 7.) Man was therefore created for this sole end—to love, to serve, to honor and adore God.

320. "The greater glory of God"—this was the controlling motive of the saints in all their actions. Our Lord Himself taught us to pray, "Hallowed be Thy name." And in the *Gloria* of the Mass the Church says, "We thank Thee for Thy great glory." Finally, to praise and glorify God is the chief occupation of the saints in heaven. The glory of God must

therefore be the chief motive also in our works of charity for the Suffering Souls. And in fact we do promote His glory in a most efficient manner by hastening their entrance into heaven, because there alone God is truly known, loved and glorified.—A saintly servant of God was so affected by this consideration that he exclaimed, "I urge everybody who is zealous for the glory of God and strives to attain His pure love, to meditate on this truth. If St. Theresa and other servants of God declared themselves willing to suffer every possible pain to increase God's glory one degree, what should we not do and suffer for the release of the souls from Purgatory, when God's glory is thereby increased in millions of degrees?"

321. St. Anthony declares that the world is like a beautiful large book in which the glory of God is inscribed with flaming letters; for even inanimate creation contributes to His glory. But of what use is a book if nobody reads it? Man alone can read in this book of nature. For a man religiously inclined the whole world is animate; everything speaks to him, everything impresses his intellect and heart. To him "the heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands. (Ps. XVIII. 2.) Every succession of day and night is a manifestation of God's wisdom and providence; every new year is an instance of His loving care for man. God, the invisible Lord of the universe, becomes visible to us in the greatness of His creation. His light shines in the stars of the firmament, His goodness grants us the splendor of the sun's rays; His bounty covers the earth with verdure and nourishing products, which He teaches us to gather and use. Who

is it that instructs the bee to collect for us the sweetness of its honey, who covers the sheep with their fleece to provide clothing for us, who ordains that the cow shall produce milk for our nourishment? It is God. "And He said, Let us make man to our image and likeness; and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts and the whole earth." (Gen. 1. 26.) For man therefore were all things created; to his heart all things should speak of the omnipotence, bounty and goodness of God.

322. While thus contemplating the beauties of God's creation, we are filled with gratitude; and we feel ourselves moved to exclaim, "How beautiful, O God, how full of perfection is Thy creation! How great is Thy bounty, how wonderful Thy providence regarding man! If even the contemplation of Thy works fills us with ineffable rapture, what must it be to behold Thee unveiled and in the splendor of Thy glory! Then we shall express our gratitude in hymns of thanksgiving, in which we shall be joined by all creation."—St. Magdalen of Pazzis one day received an apple; and she was transported with joy at the thought that God had decreed from all eternity to let this fruit grow for her special delectation.—Of St. Francis of Assisi it is related that one day, while taking his mendicant's meal of hard crust at a spring by the roadside, he wept for joy and gratitude to God. His companion could not understand how he could thus rejoice over their poor fare of bread and water; and he told him so. The saint replied, "It is the love that God shows for us for which I am so grateful. From all eternity He has decreed that we should here

receive this nourishment." Thus did the saints recognize God's bounty in the least of His gifts; and thus did they thank Him for it. And we—where is our gratitude?—

323. Oh, let us acknowledge the Lord's bounty! Let us unite in praising the Most High! But how dare we do so—we who are still slaves of the flesh, of our lusts, of our concupiscence and evil inclinations?—And even if the fetters of this our bondage were broken, "How shall we sing the song of the Lord in a strange land?" (Ps. CXXXVI. 1.) How shall we worthily know, praise and love God, as long as we are exiled in this vale of tears?—There is a means fully adapted to the attainment of our purpose. When the chief executive of a country comes to visit a place subject to his authority, the local magistrates engage artists to contribute by their services to give him a worthy reception; and though the magistrates do not personally conduct the celebrations, yet they receive the credit for them, since it was by their order that the celebrations took place.

324. The relation between God and ourselves is similar. The learned Bellarmine maintains, that what we do through another is regarded as done by ourselves. We have the privilege of engaging others to praise God in our name—namely, the souls in Purgatory. If then there is a question of glorifying God, of co-operating in causing His infinite Majesty to be worthily honored—is there a more appropriate and efficient means for the attaintment of that end than to assist in populating heaven with just souls? If we do the least for the release of a soul from Purgatory, we thereby augment God's ineffable glory; for a soul ad-

mitted to God's beatific vision becomes fully and clearly cognizant of His divine attributes—and instantly the soul is inflamed with a perfect, seraphic love of God, in which it will persevere throughout all eternity.

325. Let us imagine we saw a soul ascending from Purgatory to heaven: who can describe the joy and exultation into which it will immediately break forth, how humbly prostrated it will adore God's supreme majesty and perfections? Who can depict the ardor with which it will join in the incessant hymn of the elect, "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts! The earth is full of His glory" (Isai. VI. 3.); "to whom be honor and glory for ever and ever." (Rom. XVI. 27.) Unspeakably great then is the work performed by him who aided the soul in its release and hastened its entrance into heaven. He caused all these transports of love, gratitude, praise and glory to be offered so much the earlier to God's majesty by the soul whom he helped to ransom. The souls released through our charitable suffrages are now enjoying the eternal bliss of heaven; they will be our protectors, patrons and intercessors at the throne of God, where they join the heavenly host of angels and saints in unceasing adoration of the Most High—and this happiness they gained through our help. Must this our help therefore not be an object of infinite divine complacency?

326. Of course we do not refer here to that essential glory which is an attribute of divinity, and which God receives from His own infinite perfections; but to the accidental glory which He deigns to receive from His creatures. This glory, of which He is so jealous—"I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous"

(Exod. xx. 5.)—by what means can we better promote it than by opening heaven through our prayers for the admission of innumerable souls now suffering in Purgatory, souls who will praise and glorify His mercy throughout all eternity?—He loves these souls, and they love Him; He ardently wishes to unite them with Himself; His Heart is moved with compassion by reason of their banishment, but His justice—for as God He must be and is equally just and merciful—detains them in their prison until they shall have paid "the last farthing." He is like unto a father who declines the caresses of his son and banishes him from his presence until he shall have amended his ways by repentance and tears. The Suffering Souls are even now disciples of Christ yearning for the presence of their Master; but in His stern justice He repels them saying, "Nothing defiled is admitted into My presence." They are children of God seeking their Redeemer, but they can find Him only if the loving hand of Mother Church leads them to Him. They are famishing for His heavenly banquet, longing to partake in the Holy Sacrifice of His Sacred Body and Precious Blood; but the sacramental species are no longer their spiritual nourishment.

327. What a joy for our Father in heaven, what a delight for the Sacred Heart of Jesus, when a friend, a mediator, equalizes by his atoning suffrages the faults and punishment of a soul in Purgatory, and thereby effects a reconciliation! It is in our power to be such friends, such mediators. We can obtain pardon for the Suffering Souls. Though suffering the wrath of divine justice, they are nevertheless our brethren in Christ; and God delights to hear our prayers for them.

During His sojourn on earth our Divine Savior wept repeatedly. We have the authority of Holy Scripture for it, that He wept at least three times—at the tomb of Lazarus, over Jerusalem, and during His passion. Oh, what a most heart-rending sight, to see the tears coursing down His sacred countenance! And yet the persons for whom He wept were sinful men; on the two occasions mentioned last they were His enemies and tormentors. How great then must be our Lord's compassion for the Suffering Souls in Purgatory, who are confirmed in His grace and love! And He is compelled to make them suffer in their place of torment for weeks, months and years, perhaps for centuries! How He must yearn for mediators, who by their suffrages for these poor, beloved souls enable Him to temper His justice with mercy! For this purpose He places the full measure of His atoning merits at our disposal; and He Himself encourages us by His example.

328. From the blessed moment that "the Word was made flesh" the most Sacred Heart of Jesus began to pulsate in charity. Every one of these pulsations was an act of homage to God, more pleasing in His sight than all the worship offered by the creatures of His omnipotence in heaven and on earth. And all these acts were offered up in favor of mankind. Whatever Jesus did on earth through the impulsive love of His Sacred Heart, whether manifesting His powers by miracles or giving an example of humility, teaching His saving doctrine or suffering for our redemption—He did it all for our salvation. His every act was a new proof of His infinite love for us, a fruit of the tree of life, full of life-giving sweetness and nour-

ishing sustenance. The ecclesiastical year presents to our view step for step the various manifestations of His love for mankind. At first we behold this love taking to itself the form of an infant, appealing to our affections, enchanting, ravishing us with sweetness—a love, which as yet appears to be lying dormant. "The goodness and kindness of our Savior appeared" (Tit. III. 4.); and though He came amongst us a child, helpless and dependent, His condition is an earnest of the great work He came to achieve for us.

329. Next we behold Him in His wanderings, labors and sufferings for mankind: His hands made callous by work, His brow streaming from exertion, His frame attenuated by the long fast in the desert, His sacred feet worn and stained with travel, His divine head with no place to rest upon, no house for a shelter. And now the plan of redemption is more and more developed. He no longer suffers for the love of us by His own divine action, but from illtreatment at the hands of others, borne willingly, yea, rejoicingly for our sake. Now we behold torments, agony and death; the cords of life, strong yet tender, are ruthlessly severed; His filial devotion, His fraternal charity, His fatherly kindness—all these affections of His Divine Heart are wantonly assailed; the gratitude and veneration of an admiring populace are turned into bitter hatred. Contemplating His Sacred Body we see His head crowned with thorns, His hands and feet pierced with nails, streams of blood drawn forth by cruel scourging, His whole frame writhing in torments without number. And thus we behold Him commending His spirit into the hands of His Father.

"It is consummated!" Our redemption is accomplished. We see Him rise in splendor from the tomb, appearing to His disciples, instructing and consoling them, promising them to send the Paraclete; and then, taking leave from the scene of His labors and sufferings, He ascends into heaven where the celestial spirits rejoicingly receive Him. Finally we are invited to celebrate in joyful gratitude, with all the pomp of ecclesiastical ceremony, that miracle of ineffable love, in which are centered all the wonderful achievements of His life, from His appearance on earth as a helpless Infant to His atoning death as the Victim of our redemption—namely that mystery of divine love, the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Altar.

330. In unceasing love, gently but powerfully, mildly but irresistibly, did the Divine Heart of our Savior pulsate from the first moment of His earthly life; it pulsated lovingly in the Child and in the Man, in the manger and on the cross, when Mary nestled Him in her chaste bosom, and when the Beloved Disciple rested on His Divine Breast. For every motion of human affection His Divine Heart found an expression: it was the source of the tears He wept over unrepentant Jerusalem, of the drops of blood that exuded from His pores during His agony in the Garden, of the streams of blood that gushed forth from His four great wounds on Calvary, of that blessed fountain of regeneration which was opened in His sacred side by the soldier's spear. His very death—what was it but the offering of His last remaining drop of blood for the redemption of mankind? And He did and suffered all this for love of you, for love of me, for love of us all! We were captive in the bonds

of God's enemy, and He released us. But He released us in a manner that necessitates our co-operation. We must follow His example. "For unto this you are called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow His steps." (I Pet. II. 21.) And as we were captive and helpless before the advent of Christ, thus also shall we again be captive and helpless in Purgatory, unless the Church militant comes to our relief and assistance.

331. Let us illustrate this condition by an example taken from the Gospel. At the pool of Bethsaida lay a man "that had been eight and thirty years under his infirmity." (John v. 5.) His limbs were lamed with palsy; without aid it was impossible for him to move. "And an angel of the Lord descended at certain times into the pond, and the water was moved. And he that went down into the pond after the motion of the water was made whole of whatsoever infirmity he lay under." And this poor, sick man, behold him so yearningly anxious to be healed, hearing the movement of the waters, seeing the angel descend—and yet he is so helpless! So many passers-by, but no one to assist him! One by one the companions of his misery have been healed: they went their way rejoicing, but him they forgot. Hear him bemoaning his sad condition: "I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pond." Alas, no pitiful heart, no ministering hand to come to his aid! And for thirty-eight years he languished thus!—This is the picture of a soul in Purgatory.

332. Such a soul is in a helpless condition, unable to do anything for its own relief. Suffering, suffering! Our Lord pities the miserable condition of these

souls; He desires to receive them into His glory, and to reward their faithfulness in His service; but His justice demands full satisfaction, and their release must be delayed till payment of the last farthing has been made. And now, behold the mercy of our Savior: He does not send an angel to Bethsaida; He goes Himself to do for them what is in His power; He descends upon our altars. If at this moment the Suffering Soul were to come to Him while the cleansing flood of His atoning Blood is sparkling in the consecrated chalice—truly, its release would be assured, the soul would be permitted to fly to the bosom of its loving Spouse. But, alas! of itself it cannot come; it is captive, unable to move. Our Savior cannot loosen its bonds, because His justice demands satisfaction. To the yearning question, "How long dost Thou turn away Thy face from me?" (Ps. XII. 1.) comes the sorrowful answer, "Until the last farthing shall have been paid, either by thy own suffering, or by the suffrages of thy brethren and friends."

333. Hence our Lord commissions the Church to exhort the faithful to be merciful and charitable towards the Suffering Souls. The Holy Souls behold their brethren on earth going to the fountain of salvation; they see so many of their suffering brethren ascend to heaven, because some merciful hand has applied to them the saving flood of the Holy Sacrifice; and this or that soul — alas! — is forgotten, and cannot leave the place of torment. Why?—Hear the mournful anwer, "I have no one to come to my assistance." And sorrowfully our loving Savior inquires of mankind, "What is there that I ought to do more, and have not done?" Forsooth, what more could He have

done? One single petition of a confident heart would suffice to lessen the distance between God and the captive soul.—St. Gertrude had prayed long and fervently for a soul that apparently had departed this world in a sad condition. At length she was permitted to see it in its torments. On imploring the Lord to grant it full pardon, He replied, "My justice would not prevent Me from releasing it immediately, if thou wouldst confidently ask Me. For by My omniscience, which penetrates the future, I invested this soul with the necessary dispositions to receive the benefit of thy charity." Accordingly even a prayer may suffice to appease divine justice and to release a soul from captivity. Wonderful love of God!

334. "Now there was a certain man sick, named Lazarus, of Bethania, of the town of Mary, and Martha, her sister. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister Mary, and Lazarus. When He had heard therefore that he was sick He still remained in the same place two days: then after that He said to His disciples: Lazarus our friend sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. His disciples therefore said: Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. But Jesus spoke of his death, and they thought that He spoke of the repose of sleep. Then therefore Jesus said to them plainly: Lazarus is dead. Let us go to him. Jesus therefore came, and found that he had been four days already in the grave. And many of the Jews were come to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother. Martha therefore as soon as she heard that Jesus was come, went to meet Him, but Mary sat at home. Martha therefore said to Jesus: Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother would not

have died; but now also I know that whatever Thou wilt ask of God, He will give it Thee. Jesus saith to her: Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith to Him: I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said to her: I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me although he be dead shall live: and every one that liveth and believeth in Me, shall not die forever. Believest thou this? She saith to Him: Yea, Lord, I have believed that Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, who art come into this world. And when she had said these things, she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying: The Master is come and calleth for thee. She, as soon as she heard this, riseth quickly and cometh to Him. And seeing Him, she fell down at His feet, and saith to Him: Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. Jesus therefore, when He saw her weeping, and the Jews that were with her, weeping, groaned in spirit and troubled Himself and said: Where have you laid him? And Jesus wept. The Jews therefore said: Behold how He loved him. Jesus therefore, again groaning in Himself, cometh to the sepulchre. Now it was a cave: and a stone was laid over it. And He cried with a loud voice: Lazarus, come forth. And presently he that had been dead came forth." (John xi.)

The Son of God weeps with the sisters at the death of their brother, and then calls him to life again! Behold the efficacy of Martha's faith, of Mary's love! Except for this faith and love of his sisters Lazarus would have remained in his grave till the day of general resurrection. Our Savior graciously heard the

prayer of these sisters: and so also will He to-day hear our intercessions for our departed loved ones.

335. This wide earth of ours is our Savior's Bethania—an abode of sorrow and mourning, but nevertheless a place of happiness and bliss, because in it is a house in which He dwells and makes His abode, His Holy Church. There He remains, expecting our fervent prayers for the release of the Suffering Souls. "Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." (Matth. XXVIII. 8.) The members of this His Church are united in faith and charity. If one of our brethren or sisters dies, what does it avail to weep? Our Church is animated with the faith of Martha in Him who solves the bondage of death; with the love of Mary, who sheds tears at the feet of Jesus, and makes her weeping the expression of her confiding prayer. And as the sisters led our Savior to their brother's tomb, thus also does the faith, the love of the Church bring Him to the graves of our departed ones. The sisters of Lazarus prayed for their deceased brother and thereby effected his resurrection from the prison of the tomb; the prayer of the Church effects the release of our dead from the prison of Purgatory. Without Martha's faith and Mary's love Lazarus would have mouldered in his grave; without Catholic faith and charity innumerable souls would remain in Purgatory to the end of the world. Faith and charity are combined in prayer for the Suffering Souls, and thus the glory of God is promoted.

336. Should not these motives of the glory and love of God be a mighty incentive for us to come to the relief of the Suffering Souls? Let us remember

how greatly we are indebted to God's mercy for the innumerable benefits conferred on us every moment of our life. By aiding the Suffering Souls for the love of God we can show our gratitude at least in some measure; and if we know our duty, we will surely not neglect so easy, so consoling a means to prove ourselves grateful. Sometimes, in moments of affectionate, fervent and gratefnl sentiment—they are, alas, so few and fleeting!—we are sorry at not being able to glorify God like those apostolic men who gained whole nations for God and the faith. To help the Suffering Souls is to exercise an apostolate, which is almost if not fully as promotive of God's glory, and nearly if not quite as fruitful for heaven, as are the most zealous labors of missionaries. Here we behold a multitude of just souls in need of spiritual aid. Their want is not that of faith, but of atonement; our object is not their conversion, but their attainment of heaven. For this purpose we are not obliged to cross oceans, to penetrate wildernesses, to learn foreign languages; a prayer, an alms, a Holy Mass may be sufficient. Moreover we need not fear for their final perseverance; by our suffrages we insure for them the everlasting enjoyment of God and heaven.

337. Consider now, Christian soul, the greatness of this work of charity and gratitude; consider how well pleased God will be with the prayers and good works of those who offer them in satisfaction, to release the Suffering Souls—how pleased He will be if the admission of such a soul to the beatific vision were thereby hastened even for one hour. Remember the words of our Lord, "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did

it to Me." (Matth. xxiv. 40.) Our Lord Himself revealed to St. Gertrude that these words apply in a special manner to the Suffering Souls. Dionysius the Carthusian quotes her, saying: "As often as you release a soul from Purgatory, the Lord is so pleased thereat as if He Himself had been released from prison by you; and in due time He will reward you most graciously for this charity."—Who amongst us will refuse any longer to follow the foot-steps of our Lord who suffered for us? The glory and love of God, and the gratitude we owe Him, are most powerful motives, which should ever impel us to devote our lives to the release of the Suffering Souls.

§ 54. Motives Relating to the Suffering Souls.

338. On the 30th of May, 1889, I was about to start for the East to visit a friend, and to prepare a class of first Communicants for the reception of the Blessed Eucharist. I felt an inexplicable oppression of mind, an apprehensive fear of starting on my journey, so that I had to be reminded repeatedly that there was no time to lose. During the following night on the train, between the 30th and 31st of May, I was very restless. The next morning, however, on leaving Pittsburg, I became calmer. Resigned to the will of God, I was prepared for the worst. Before evening my unusual disquietude was explained: I became a witness of one of the greatest calamaties of modern times, the Johnstown flood. After the bursting of the reservoir the river Conemaugh continued to rise with appalling rapidity, until the angry waters had torn away bridges, out-houses and telegraph poles, under-

mined the railroad tracks and threatened destruction to the main part of the town. The flood struck Johnstown towards five in the evening; and the inhabitants had been warned to fly to the hills for their lives. Thousands were intercepted in their flight and found a watery grave.

339. No pen can describe the heart-rending scenes that followed. The masses of water destroyed everything in their way. Thousands had sought safety in their houses; but the raging waters surrounded them, undermined the foundations, swept away the buildings together with their unfortunate inmates, men, women and children, till the great stone piers of the railroad bridge impeded their progress. Here they stuck fast and were exposed to the fury of the destructive element, until they fell to pieces and spilled their inmates into the yawning gulf. Hundreds sank to rise no more; and still the mass of wreck and ruin continued to increase, until it was three quarters of a mile long and between thirty and sixty feet wide, rising high out of the water. About fifteen hundred people were imprisoned here, some caught between the ruins, others free and able to move about in the debris.

340. To add to the horrors of the situation, fire broke out among the ruins. At first it burned slowly, the curling smoke apprising the dazed spectators on the shore of the new danger threatening their parents, brothers, sisters, relatives and fellow citizens. Soon the lurid flames greedily devoured whatever was in their reach, and lighted up the darkness in ghastly splendor. Horror of horrors! They attack the mass of living, moving, writhing humanity. Cries for help

rend the air. Helpless misery everywhere—on the burning ruins the terrified victims of water and fire, on the shore a mass of people frantic because there is no way to aid the sufferers. Some of the latter escaped the flames to find death in the water, or were crushed in the debris; and thus the sad spectacle continued until the seething mass was engulfed in darkness beneath the bridge.

341. An adequate description of these horrors cannot be given. And now, O Christian soul, consider: if the Suffering Souls in Purgatory were to appear before us on such a burning pile to move us to mercy; if they were to appear in their bodies, as they once lived here on earth, and if we saw them surrounded by flames, themselves one seething mass of fire—who amongst us could repress his tears on witnessing their sad condition, on hearing their lamentations?—As the helpless victims of the Johnstown disaster called for help, thus also do the Suffering Souls implore our aid. "To you we have recourse," they call, "on you, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, relatives, friends, neighbors, on you we call for aid, and for the sake of a vain pleasure you forget our torments! Remember, we are in a place where we have to atone for every evil thought, for every idle word, in a fire which, though not everlasting, in every other respect resembles that of hell."

342. The disaster of Johnstown was appalling. But, oh, how would the souls in Purgatory congratulate themselves if divine justice would not demand more of them than what the victims of that calamity had to undergo. The difference between suffering in this and the next world is great. Here on earth God

punishes us as our Father, even when He fulfils the word of the royal prophet, "I will visit their iniquities with a rod, and their sins with stripes." (Ps. LXXXVIII. 33.) But in the next world God punishes us as our Judge. "For He will render to a man his work, and according to the ways of every one He will reward them. For in very deed God will not condemn without cause; neither will the Almighty pervert judgment." (Job XXXIV. 11, 12.) In this world we can satisfy the justice of God as it were by way of compromise; in the next world we must atone according to the rigor of His judgment. In the world beyond we must suffer not only what all sinners have to suffer in this world, but also the punishment that sin deserves in its aspect as a rebellion against God. We must suffer punishment not only for sin, but we must also atone for all the graces which sin prevented us from receiving. We must moreover suffer not only for all the injustice and malice towards others, with which sin is so often fraught, but also for the offense and insult thereby offered to God.

343. God is so great, man so insignificant; God offers us so much, sin so little; God loves us so tenderly, and we offend Him so boldly! Considered from this view it is easy to measure the suffering of a soul in Purgatory: it is commensurate with the disparity between the infinite majesty of an offended God and the perishable trifle for which the soul offended Him; the disparity between the infinite goodness of an offended God, and the base ingratitude of a creature that once despised Him. As this disparity is inconceivable to us, the torments of Purgatory are also inconceivable; and hence we should have pity on the souls that must suffer these torments.

344. By sin God was offended, and Purgatory resulted as one of the means to satisfy divine justice. "It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebr. x. 31.) God often punished sin in a most dreadful manner even in this world. We find a proof of this in the people of Israel, who were attacked in the desert by venomous serpents; in the boys that were torn by wild beasts because they had ridiculed the prophet Eliseus; in Ananias and Saphira, who fell dead because they had lied to the Apostle. If God punishes sin thus severely in this world, how will He punish it in the next? And we should have no compassion, no pity, no heart for the souls in Purgatory?

345. Purgatory is moreover the place of punishment for the elect. We read in the lives of the saints how severely they punished themselves for the smallest faults. They fasted rigorously, and scourged themselves till they drew blood; they were assiduous in all kinds of austerities and never rested in their labors - and this they did not merely for a few days or weeks, but for years, and in some cases for almost a hundred years. Can we read the lives of the holy hermits Anthony, Hilarion, Pelagius and others without shuddering at the austerities they practiced? Can we remember the penitential code of the early Church without astonishment at its rigor? And yet in those days public scandals were of rare occurrence. If the Church, who is a loving Mother, imposed such severe penances on her dear children to preserve them from the torments of Purgatory—what then will God demand of a soul in the place of atonement, if despite all the opportunities and graces offered it was remiss in rendering satisfaction to divine justice?

346. The saints chose the most excruciating pains and sufferings in this world, even praying to obtain them: but we know of no instance that a saint ever desired to undergo the sufferings of Purgatory, or viewed them with that callous indifference so often to be found among Christians of our day. They rather regarded them with dread and terror, and suffered in this world for the very purpose of escaping suffering in the next. If even the saints, who loved suffering and regarded martyrdom as a blessing, trembled at the thought of Purgatory, we may conclude how great the difference must be between the sufferings here and hereafter. Let us therefore believe the holy Fathers when they tell us that one day in Purgatory is a punishment more severe than a hundred years of the most austere penance in this world.

347. Purgatory is a middle state between heaven and hell, and the soul is affected by the proximity of both. At all events it is painfully affected by the proximity of hell. For like hell Purgatory is a state of bondage and captivity. According to many theological writers it has the darkness and desolation, the flames and fire of hell; it has everything that hell has to terrify us, except despair and everlasting duration of punishment. If we should see someone in a fiery furnace, we would do our utmost to get him out of it, even if he was our greatest enemy. This was illustrated at the horrible calamity of Johnstown. Parents, children, relatives, friends stood on the shore anxious to save whomsoever they could. Now, as regards the Suffering Souls, we *can* help them. What have they done to us that we *do not* help them, that we permit them to suffer on, though in life they were perhaps

our most intimate friends? Besides we must remember the terrible pains of sense which the souls in Purgatory suffer; also that most intense pain resulting from their deprivation of the beatific vision of God. They languish, they yearn to see their God; and they are banished from His presence. They are near to Him, and yet so far away. They seek Him and find Him not. They are attracted to Him and feel themselves repulsed. They sigh continually for Him and are not heard. What a torment, what inexpressible suffering! And yet we have no compassion on them!

348. Alas, these Poor Souls are in the debtors' prison, and are unable to do anything for their own release. Their time of merit is over. Their day is past, the night has befallen them. Their cry for mercy is unheard, as far as they themselves are concerned. Their tears no longer blot out their misdeeds. For them there are no longer the sacraments, indulgences, means of grace. No longer can they atone for their faults by good works, prayer, fasting and alms-deeds in virtue of Christ's redeeming Blood. "For the time hath its end" (Dan. VIII. 19.); that is, their time of merit is past. For them the time of suffering has come. And how long must they suffer? Who can know? who can tell? It is the pious custom of the Church to pray for the departed centuries after their death; by this she conclusively proves that she believes, or fears, that these souls, so long since departed, are still suffering. These souls then can not do the least for their own release. They cry to us for relief, they call on us for help. We *can* help them and we do not! We know that they are undergoing the punishment inflicted by divine wrath; we know

that works of atonement are necessary for their relief; we know that they suffer the most excruciating torments in their helpless condition—and yet we refuse to help them! Have we hearts of stone?

349. The Suffering Souls in Purgatory, knowing that of themselves they can not cause any change in their deplorable condition, and that we can do so much for them, continually implore us to come to their aid by applying to them the merits of the life, sufferings and death of Jesus Christ from out of the treasury of the Church. But as they cannot without God's special permission draw our attention personally to their needs, the Church does it in their place both by means of her many pious practices for their relief, as also by calling our attention to their pitiable state. Hence the Venerable Catherine Emmerich observes: "Oh, these Poor Souls have so much to suffer because of their negligence, because of their former want of piety and zeal for God and their neighbor. How shall they be aided except by atoning charity, which offers up for them those acts of virtue which they neglected during life? And how they yearn for this charity! For themselves they can no longer do anything. But they also know that no good thought, no sincere desire offered up for them by the living, is without effect. Yet how few care for them! If anybody prays for them, suffers for them, gives alms for them, they immediately experience relief."

350. Since we know, and know by faith, how great the torments of these just souls in Purgatory are, should we not be moved to compassion for them? We cannot endure to see a living creature

tormented, and can we be so insensible to the sufferings of these friends of God as to regard them with indifference, so unfeeling as to refuse to mitigate them? When our Lord saw the sick man at Bethsaida, who suffered for thirty-eight years because he had no one to place him into the water, His Heart was moved to pity; and He passed by the other sick and healed this one, who was unable to help himself. The condition of the souls in Purgatory is similar. Will the example of our Divine Lord not impel us to help them?

351. Grateful love for our deceased is so deeply imprinted into our hearts, that there are only few who are insensible to it. We even find that after death our love increases for those who were dear to us in life. Their loss makes us feel their worth more keenly. And those whom we neglected during life—we miss them when they are no longer among us. We have even a kindly feeling for those in their graves, of whom we had reason to complain during life. Their defects are forgotten, and we remember only their virtues. These sentiments were implanted into our hearts by our loving Creator as a connecting link between this world and the next, by means of which we remain in contact with Himself and His elect, and even with such of the latter as do not yet enjoy His beatific vision. He, the Father of mercies and God of all consolation, loves them Himself and cheers them with the hope of release and bliss after His justice shall have been satisfied and their purification attained. They are His elect, objects of His love; and hence our charity should extend to them. "A gift hath grace in the sight of all the living, and restrain not grace from the dead." (Eccli. VII. 37.)

352. Who are the souls for whose speedy release we should offer our prayers, the Holy Sacrifice of Mass, and good works? They are souls that once inhabited a frail human body like our own, a body created by God and now mouldering in its grave or in the bottom of the deep. Like ourselves these souls had to engage in combat against temptations of the flesh, against the evil influence of the world and the devil. Like ourselves they feared death, and even now they are open to the influence of pain and joy. Like ourselves they are Christians, ransomed by the same Precious Blood of a dying God-Man; perhaps they dwelt with us in the same community; at all events they shared with us the same holy sacraments and means of grace; perhaps they were our best friends, to whom we are indebted for many an important service. Moreover, our faith enjoins us to extend our charity not only to those that were dear to us in life, or to whom we are indebted for their good will towards us, but to all men; hence our charity must embrace also all souls that are in need of our prayer and help.

353. Again, gratitude and justice must impel us in a particular manner to this charity. Who are the Suffering Souls, whose pitiful condition appeals to us? Perhaps a dear father, once so solicitous for your welfare, earning bread for you in the sweat of his brow, laboring for your success in life, and perhaps suffering now for the very reason that he had too much regard for your welfare and therefore neglected his duty towards the poor. Ask him why he is thus suffering, and he will answer you with the sick man in the Gospel, "I have no one to help me!"—Perhaps the Suf-

fering Soul is a fond mother who brought you forth to life, who loved you with her whole heart, who spent herself for you; and now perhaps she has to suffer for the very reason that she was too fond of you, and therefore neglected to correct your faults, thinking that the virtues with which she imbued you were sufficient to counteract them. And now listen to her plaintive cry, "I have no one to help me!"

354. Or perhaps it is the soul of your pastor and spiritual guide that appeals to you for help. During life he conscientiously followed the advice of St. Paul, "Preach the word, be instant in and out of season; reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine." (II Tim. IV. 2.) But because greater perfection is demanded of the priest than of the rest of the faithful, and because neglect of duty is more reprehensible in him than in others, he is sentenced to purification in the fiery furnace; and because the faithful had so high a regard for his virtue, they neglect to pray for him; his chances of relief and deliverance are the smaller, the greater the esteem in which he was held. He helped so many others in life and in death, but was perhaps remiss in his duty towards the dead. And now, alas, he joins the mournful chorus, "I have none to help me!"

Perhaps your brothers and sisters, so dear to you in life, one heart and one soul with you in consequence of the same training, the same bent of mind, are in that fiery furnace; or it is your teacher who spent himself for your mental and moral improvement, sowing the good seed of religion and virtue into your heart; or they are relatives and friends, who with you bore the burden and heat of the day, taking upon

themselves a great part of your share, ever ready to help, console and encourage you. Alas, you give them cause to join in the mournful plaint, "I have no one to help me!"

355. Or perhaps it is the soul of one, who in the opening bloom of life was most dear to you and was about to become one with you for life in the sacred bond of matrimony; but the grim reaper Death suddenly swung his scythe—the blooming flower drooped and withered and was laid away to await the angel's call to resurrection; and the soul which you so often tried to fathom to its depth, in whose love you found the supreme joy and happiness of your life—where is it now? Your own wealth of affection was too sensual, it called forth a like sentiment in your beloved, and your affianced's soul is undergoing punishment for a fault for which you are to blame. You cover the grave with flowers, you rear a splendid monument—and that is all! Listen, hear the mournful cry, "I have no one to help me!"

Or the soul is that of a faithful servant, who spent his best years and gave his sincerest efforts in serving you, even so far as to neglect the service of God.—It is a soldier who laid down his life in defence of his country, in consequence of which you enjoy the blessings of peace. They also swell the mournful dirge, "I have no one to help me!"

How can you, how dare you neglect these and all the other Suffering Souls not mentioned in this hasty sketch? Their plaintive cry is voiced by holy Job, whose sufferings were nothing in comparison to theirs: "Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends; for the hand of the Lord hath touched me." (Job, XIX. 21.)

356. Oh, that we could see our suffering friends atoning for their faults in the deep abyss and fiery furnace into which Divine Justice has cast them! Oh, that we could hear their plaintive cries for help, their mournful reproaches of our neglect and hardness of heart! Children would hear their parents cry to them in the words of the prophet, "I have brought up children and exalted them, and they have despised me." (Isai. 1. 2.)—Hence St. Leonard of Port Maurice justly censures all hard-hearted Christians as follows: "What are you about? Are you children or are you brutes and monsters of cruelty to remain unmoved at the bitter plaints of your father, of your mother? There are instances of tigers exposing themselves to certain death in defence of their young, of reptiles casting themselves into the flames to save their brood from burning: and you will not descend into Purgatory to save your poor father, your suffering mother from its painful flames? You are so hard of heart as to refuse to lend them a helping hand by the performance of a good work for their relief? Go, then, if this be so, go and tear down from your walls the pictures of your parents and cast them into the fire, rejoicing that while the originals are burning in Purgatory through your fault, their pictures may share their lot."

357. Heartless child, your parents have reason indeed to address you thus, "I loved my children so dearly; I ever had their welfare at heart, and they so soon forgot me! They still eat my bread; they owe to me whatever they possess, and yet it no longer reminds them of me!"—And the forgotten friend exclaims with David, "If my enemy had reviled me, I would have verily borne with it. And if he that hated

me had spoken great things against me, I would perhaps have hid myself from him: but thou, a man of one mind, my guide and my familiar, who didst take sweet meats together with me!" (Ps. LIV.) "You, my friend, who promised me on my death-bed to remember me, have so soon forgotten me! You feel compassion for malefactors suffering for their crimes, but for the soul of your friend you feel no pity! Unfaithful friend, mercy shall not be shown to you, because you showed none to me!"

358. Christian soul, answer candidly; it is the Church that asks you the question, the Church whose faith you profess and whose sacraments you receive: Is it really true, have you so shamefully neglected your departed dear ones? The souls of these departed ask this question; the souls of those that have a rightful claim on your gratitude and affection.—You are silent?—But in the depth of your heart you sigh: "Alas, it is true!" The tears start from your eyes and course down your cheeks in acknowledgment of your fault. And indeed, you have reason to weep scalding tears of repentance: it is dreadful to neglect for weeks, months and even years to say even one "Our Father" for the Suffering Souls, for those who during life were so fervent, so persevering in their prayer for us. It is awful not to have contributed even a mite of good works for the relief of those who must languish in prison till the "last farthing is paid." O Catholics, where is your faith and your practice of the faith? Where is your charity and its practical demonstration? Where is your heart and its sentiment of compassion?

359. Oh, do not, in proof that you did *not* forget your departed ones, call attention to the pompous

funeral display you ordered, to the costly casket, the profusion of flowers, the imposing monument. Vanity of vanities! It is help, *help* they need, relief for which they cry in the words of Joseph in Pharaoh's prison: "Remember me when it shall be well with thee and do me this kindness to take me out of this prison." (Gen. XL. 14.) This is the touching prayer of your father or mother, your brother or sister, your husband or wife, your friend or benefactor.

360. Pray, oh, pray for their release from the gloomy prison, that they may rejoicingly enter the heavenly court to partake of the banquet of God's elect, there to welcome us after our own death. This is our hope, our prayer, our supplication—that the greater our sorrow was at parting, the greater may be our joy at that heavenly reunion.—To meet again! What a charm this assurance has for the human heart! Witness the gloom, the sorrow cast over a home, because a dear son is about to take his leave. The father's tears start unbidden while he says the parting words; the mother's heart is rent asunder and she will not be comforted—again and again she holds her child in fond embrace; brothers and sisters repress the outburst of their sorrow to spare their parents, but their trembling lips can scarcely say the dreaded word, "Farewell!"—"Farewell, to meet again!" the answer comes. The scene is changed. A gleam of sunshine pierces through the lowering clouds. "To meet again!" The smile of hope dispels the gloom of parting.

361. How different, how bitter, when the assurance and conviction are expressed that the parting from our dear ones is forever!—The aged father's life

is fast ebbing away. "It is towards evening and the day is now far spent." (Luke XXIV. 29.) He assembles his children around his dying couch, and in a weak but most impressive voice reminds them of his instructions during life; he warns them of the dangers of disobedience and neglect of duty. Amid loud sobbing they listen to his parting words. And now his voice is hushed—is stilled in death.

The loving husband sees the wife of his bosom slowly wasting away. He does whatever is in his power to ease her pains, but physicians and their remedies avail no longer. Her earthly doom is sealed; in the strong arms of him to whom she confidently trusted her life's happiness, she yields her spirit to God.—But why prolong these heart-rending scenes? Few there are who have not experienced this sorrow. But one ordeal remains to be undergone: the mortal remains are consigned to the grave.—Farewell! Farewell!—Though lips, from sorrow, cannot say the word, 'tis indelibly engraven on the heart.

362. Farewell forever in this vale of tears!—And yet, "We mourn not as those who have no hope."—"Farewell to meet again in heaven!" O beauty of our heaven-given religion! O sweetness of its hope and consolation! To meet again in heaven!—"And I heard a voice from heaven saying to me: Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord!" (Apoc. XIV. 13.)—"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live: and every one that liveth and believeth in Me shall not die forever." (John XI. 25. 26.) Why then mourn our dead excessively, if we have this consoling promise by the word of Divine Truth?—You may weep at the

death of your loved ones; 'tis but natural to do so, and Jesus Himself wept at the tomb of Lazarus. But why be disconsolate? We shall meet them all again. Thus Holy Church bids us to hope and pray; thus Holy Writ assures us: "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise again incorruptible." (I. Cor. xv. 52.)—"How do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (I Cor. xv. 12.) To meet again: O happy thought, consoling assurance!

363. To meet again!—What ineffable joy is contained in this hope! Our Lord Himself assures us: "You now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you." (John xvi. 22.)—When our dear ones after a long absence return home again, we ask ourselves how we can welcome them with the most pleasant surprise. And if we can do nothing in this respect, we at least remove everything that might displease them. And how well pleased is the returning member of the family at seeing that his own love him in word and deed, and that they spared no sacrifice to render the meeting a happy one.

364. Now, what shall we do to render happy those of our loved ones who returned to their true home, who passed through the portals of eternity? Many of them are still undergoing punishment for their unatoned faults. Could we only see them, we could not but give them proof of our sympathy. Or would you not make use of the means of relief placed at your disposal? Would you refuse them your help, and thereby demonstrate your disregard for them? If so, they will not meet you in gladness when you enter the portals of the next world; they will give their wel-

come to those who were more charitable than you.—You often remark, "Oh, that they were still living, they to whom I owe my being! Dear mother, could I but see you once more! Dear friends, whose intercourse and loving kindness is so pleasant a remembrance, oh, that I could show how grateful I am to you! If you were still among the living, I would do everything in my power for you."—Christian soul, if these are really your sentiments, you can now show your gratitude. Faith tells you plainly and unmistakably what to do for your dear ones. If they have departed this world without having fully atoned for all their faults, they are now in torments compared with which all suffering in this world is as nothing. They call for your help. "Have pity on me!" Come to their aid, assist them to enter their heavenly home as soon as possible.

365. Faith describes to you the instinctive desire of every soul parted from its body to reach its ultimate destiny; and it shows you conclusively how this desire is the source of the most intense pain. The attainment of this their supreme good is denied by divine justice to your dear ones; they are detained in their abode of misery and separation from God, and nothing remains to them but to lament and sigh, "When shall I come and appear before the face of God?" (Ps. XLI. 3.) "When will the happy hour arrive when we shall possess our supreme and infinite good, enjoying the beatific vision of our God, and with it everlasting bliss? O beautiful gates of the heavenly Jerusalem, if our present suffering is not sufficient to open you to us, let it be increased until we shall be permitted to pass through you!"—"Be ye lifted up, O eternal

gates!" (Ps. XXIII. 7.) — Alas, the gates are not opened, the blessed hour is delayed, the beatific vision is denied. Hence the ceaseless yearning, the unrequited desire of love, the painful straining toward the attainment of its object, incomprehensible to us until we shall be able to comprehend its source. "Give me a loving soul," says St. Augustine, "to understand what I intend to convey."—"When shall I come and appear before the face of God?" —You must either pay "the last farthing" of your debt yourself, or payment must be made for you by your friends on earth. "Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends!"

366. Now you realize to a certain degree the condition of your loved ones in eternity; and you know that you are able to assist them. Will you delay your help and retard their entrance into our heavenly home, where they will joyously receive you?— If you find a suffering stranger whose distress is relieved by no one, you have him taken care of and receive his sincere gratitude for this fulfilment of your Christian duty. But your dear ones in the other world—shall they alone be denied your aid? Oh, no! Your meeting with them after this life is to be a joyous one; they shall conduct you into heavenly bliss!

We related in a former paragraph, that according to a private revelation of Sister Frances of the Blessed Sacrament the soul of Pope Gregory XV. was surrounded by saints at its entrance into heaven after a short Purgatory, and was principally attended by the five saints he had canonized in 1622, viz. SS. Theresa, John of the Cross, Isidore, Ignatius and Francis Xavier.—Let us do our share and have the attendance

of our loved ones in the same manner. It will be granted to us, if we hasten their release by our good works. What a joy to behold those meeting us as saints, whom we so dearly loved on earth!—Or shall they go and meet other benefactors?

367. Christian soul, are these motives on the part of the Suffering Souls not sufficiently powerful to move our hearts to compassion, and to invite us to procure their speedy relief?—Their misery is beyond doubt; it is beyond our comprehension; it concerns our friends and benefactors, at all events those who are our brethren in Christ. Oh, let us hear their pitiful cry for help; let us renew our zeal for them from the unselfish motives of fraternal charity, of good example; let us pray for the repose of the immortal souls of the faithful departed; let us have the Holy Sacrifice of Mass, this most effiectual means of speedy relief, offered for them; let us offer for them our own devout assistance at it; let us charitably aid the poor and distressed for this intention, and deny ourselves for them by fasting and other works of penance. Let us unite these our good works with the infinite merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, humbly imploring Him to receive and offer them to His Heavenly Father for the relief and speedy release of the Suffering Souls. If we do it in this spirit and manner, we may rest assured that we shall be heard.

§ 55. Motives Relating to Ourselves.

368. The fear of neglecting our own spiritual welfare by thus zealously aiding the Suffering Souls is a vain apprehension. There is no better means of promoting our own salvation than charity for the souls in

Purgatory. The greatest benefits accrue to us therefrom. We know by our own experience how manifold are the dangers that threaten our spiritual and temporal welfare, and how much need we have in all things of divine blessing and protection; and these we secure to ourselves most effectually by charity for the Suffering Souls. This charity is therefore of the utmost consequence in relation to our salvation; for by it we not only help the Suffering Souls to a more speedy attainment of heaven, but we thereby increase our own zeal and atone for our own faults.

369. Hence our Lord exhorts us: "Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity; that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings" (Luke XVI. 9.), thus reminding us to engage the prayers of the poor by our alms, in order to obtain the graces necessary for our salvation. Now, who amongst the poor will more certainly pray for us than the souls in Purgatory, those friends of God who are in such great distress, so needful of help and unable to do anything for themselves? And whose prayer is more powerful than that of these elect Holy Souls?—Let us therefore make them our friends by mitigating their torments by means of our prayers and good works.

370. If the scanty alms which we give to the poor during life and which relieves them only partly and for a time, imposes on them the obligation of praying for us in return, is it not obvious that the souls of the faithful departed must feel themselves impelled to implore God's choicest blessings on us for relieving them from the utmost misery and leading them to supreme bliss? They will not be ungrateful or forgetful as

Pharaoh's chief butler was of Joseph. "Remember me, when it shall be well with thee," thus Joseph spoke to the butler. It will not be necessary for us to address such words to the Poor Souls. Released from their fiery prison and admitted to the long desired vision of God, they will of their own accord intercede for us, for our families and for all our dear ones; they will pray for us at the throne of God, asking His blessing on all our undertakings. They will surround our death-bed to assist us in that all-important combat, protecting us against the final assaults of the enemy. They will in fine conduct our souls to the tribunal of God, recommending them to His mercy. And so the word of Holy Writ will be verified in us, "Do good to the just, and thou shalt find great recompense; and if not of him, assuredly of the Lord." (Eccli. XII. 2.)

371. Even self-interest should impel us to come to the relief of the Suffering Souls. St. Vincent of Paul assures us, "I do not remember ever to have heard or read that a person devoted to charity died an evil death." Now, what charity is more genuine, what mercy more truly Christian, than that shown towards the Suffering Souls? We call them *Poor* Souls; and they *are* truly poor. They are a class of poor whom we do not see with mortal eyes; a class of sufferers, whose distress is revealed to us by faith, whose misery is most helpless. Most surely they will pray for us, even before we have obtained their final release. They will obtain for us a happy death; and if perhaps we shall be sentenced to that place of torment from which we released them, they in their turn will not cease to implore divine mercy until they have obtained our release. Eternal Truth declares, "With

the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again." (Luke VI. 38.)

372. How confidently we might expect our end, if we had the conviction that during our life we have released only one soul from Purgatory! This would insure for us the mercy of God. He would inspire others to make satisfaction for us by their mortifications, penitential exercises and other suffrages. He would apply in our favor the prayers, Holy Sacrifices, fasts and other pious works of the Church. And we shall be greatly in need of suffrages; for we can scarcely hope to leave this world in such a state of perfection and purity that we shall owe nothing to divine justice. For at the tribunal of Eternal Justice nothing will be overlooked, everything will be scrutinized; the time of mercy is over; justice asserts its claim. Will it then not be to our everlasting gain, if we have released at least one soul from Purgatory? This soul would most certainly be our advocate with God in return for our charity, and would obtain for us what we obtained for it.

373. But the reverse is also true. "With the same measure that you shall mete, it shall be measured to you again." If we are uncharitable and insensible to the claims of the deceased during our lives, we shall receive in just retribution the same treatment after death. Let us place vividly before our eyes the condition in which we shall then be. We shall yearn for the assistance of others, for the application to us of the fruits of Holy Mass, for prayer, alms, etc. Let us therefore do for the souls in Purgatory *now*, what we shall wish to be done for us *then*. Let us practice the golden rule of the Gospel, "Do unto others

as you would have them do to you." If we do not pray for the dead now, our survivors will forget us also, and we shall have to serve out our sentence "to the last farthing." And even in case suffrages are offered for us, God will apply them to other more deserving souls. For St. Augustine declares, "God reserves to Himself the distribution of our suffrages. He accepts them in favor of those souls who during life excelled in charity towards the poor. 'With the same measure that you mete, it shall be measured to you again'." Great, then, are the benefits which we receive in return for our charity towards the Suffering Souls.

374. Moreover, by remembering the Suffering Souls the torments of Purgatory are placed vividly before our mind. When the Church teaches us her doctrine of the middle state, she wishes us to take to heart salutary lessons concerning the rigor of divine justice—that justice, which demands satisfaction for the least sin of omission or commission, and atonement for every fault not atoned for during life. Let us therefore endeavor most earnestly to avoid even the least sin; and if we have the misfortune to fall, let us rise at once and make atonement. Now is the time of mercy; now our tears, prayers, self-denials, works of charity, etc., are of great value before God; now we can atone for much by doing a little. St. Catherine of Genoa remarks, "On earth we can pay a debt of great amount by a small sum; that is, we can atone by a little suffering in this world for great punishment due to us in the next."—God treats us now as the king in the Gospel treated his servant, who owed him ten thousand talents: He condones the whole debt. But after death the time of mercy is at an end. If we

are not merciful here, we shall be cast into prison like the merciless servant, where we shall be detained until the "last farthing is paid." How great therefore are the benefits that we receive from charity for the dead!

375. Everything done for the faithful departed in the state of grace and from motives of Christian charity is most salutary for them. It hastens their release, it procures their admission to eternal bliss. But these suffrages are also most salutary for us; and the benefits we thereby insure to ourselves will be the greater, the more diligent and zealous we are in offering our suffrages, provided we offer them also from pure and holy motives. Charity for the Suffering Souls renders us more compassionate; it increases our spiritual fervor; it impels us to greater exertions for the attainment of perfection; in a word, it promotes in us the growth of holiness. The devout consideration of Purgatory, of whose inmates the sanctity and justice of God demand such rigorous satisfaction, will teach us both the misfortune of guilt, as also the ineffable happiness of innocence. These decenniums, these centuries of suffering show us the abyss which sin and guilt opens between God and man; and our hearts must have lost entirely the faculty of love, its springs of affection must have dried up, if on making such a meditation they do not tremble to their very depths, and cry to the atoning Blood of Christ for mercy. Should we therefore not love and practice this devotion instead of disregarding and neglecting it? Will this devotion not make us more merciful, more zealous, more devoted to works of charity and piety? Will it not bring us nearer to our last end, to God and His kingdom?

376. From all this it follows that charity for the souls in Purgatory is of the greatest importance as far as our own salvation is concerned. By our good works we help the Suffering Souls, while at the same time we revive our own zeal. But the Suffering Souls also show themselves grateful towards us, and this even before they have attained their release by our intercession. Jesus Christ Himself is grateful to us for the aid we give them. He is so bountiful to us poor mortals; and we share His bounty with souls that are still poorer than we are ourselves, but who are nevertheless holy and confirmed in His grace. What a privilege, to be able to relieve those in torment, to bring joy to those in distress! We often remark, "I am continually worried by crosses and trials, and I feel so despondent. I tried everything without avail; I am forgotten by God. Oh, what a life! Working incessantly, but without merit, because I am in the state of sin!" And yet if such persons would only add to these trials a few well-meant offerings for the souls in Purgatory, matters would soon wear a different aspect. Perhaps this alone is wanting to insure their triumph over evil, to achieve success, and to perfect their works, prayers and good purposes.

377. Little as this may seem to us, we must remember that in spiritual matters little things are of great importance. "Another parable He proposed to them, saying: The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: which is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown up, it is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come und dwell in its branches." (Matth. XIII. 31, 32.) Who would sup-

pose that so mighty a tree is contained in so insignificant a seed? The beginning is so small, scarcely visible to the eye—the end so grand and imposing. And yet the whole is contained in the insignificant little seed.—Those few but sincere offerings for the Suffering Souls are so insignificant in our eyes, but they contain a mighty source of consolation, of strength and courage to do great things for ourselves and for the souls in Purgatory. On the other hand, a misconception concerning the providence of God is the source of all our pusillanimous distrust. At first we scarcely deem it worthy of our notice, but in the end it leads to serious consequences.

378. It is a doctrine of faith that the essential beatitude of heaven consists in the vision of God. Yet the vision of the saints, compared with God's contemplation of Himself, is less than a drop of water compared with the ocean. "All nations are before Him as if they had no being at all, and are counted to Him as nothing, and vanity." (Isai. xi. 17.) Hence St. Augustine says, "O Lord, God of all truth, how unhappy the man that knows all creatures, but knows not Thee! How happy he who knows Thee, even though he be ignorant of all else! Thou alone, O my God, dost make Him happy." Nevertheless God grants to His elect also an additional happiness, which consists in the knowledge of His creatures. To see God and enjoy His possession is the essential happiness of heaven; to know and enjoy His creatures is its additional happiness.

379. Yet there are and always have been persons, even amongst those "whose lips should keep knowledge" and at whose mouth we should "seek the law"

(Malach. II. 7), who deny this and contend that in heaven everything else is forgotten in God. This is a three-fold error; as much a contradiction of truth as it is a violation of charity. That consolation which the world cannot give is praised more highly than ever at the moment when the grave closes over the mortal remains of someone dear to us. And though time heals the wound caused by death, there are often days and hours when it bleeds anew. Therefore we deem it a grateful task to adduce such testimony approved by the Church as will be sufficiently strong to remove the shadows that would fain intrude themselves between the human eye and the next world; and to show in the mirror of faith that there is in heaven a blissful reunion of those who loved each other on earth.

380. Life in heaven is perfect, because it embraces everything that is good. In Purgatory it is imperfect, because it is deprived of the vision of God, the essential good. In heaven the saints see God face to face; and in this divine mirror they behold everything essential to their eternal bliss: why should they not see and know the condition and needs of those who were dear to them on earth? Besides their supernatural, infused knowledge the souls in Purgatory possess that natural and incidental knowledge which they acquired on earth, as was demonstrated in a former chapter. Is it rational to think, that among all their natural acquisitions they should be deprived of the very one best calculated to contribute to their eternal happiness or to the mitigation of their penal state—the knowlege of their relatives and friends on earth? "Hence," says St. Gregory Nazianzen, "it is im-

possible that the inhabitants of the other world, despite their intimate intercourse with God, do not converse with one another about their past. By recounting their former combats and mutually communicating various other circumstances pertaining to their earthly existence, they are enabled to recognize one another as former contemporaries, neighbors, relatives and friends."

381. In heaven and in Purgatory everything is charity. The sun's rays transmit light and warmth at the same time; and so also does charity grow with knowledge. "Charity never falleth away" (I Cor. XIII. 8.), and this unfailing charity embraces in harmonious union God, our neighbor and ourselves. Why then should a Christian, after leaving this earth, cease to love those whom he loved here below? His love of God and of self is increased in the next world—why should this not be the case also with regard to his love for his neighbor? St. Bernard, deploring the death of his brother, writes these tender words, "Thou hast laid aside whatever savored of weakness, but not thy sympathy and compassion, because 'charity never falleth away.'" St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that in eternity everybody will retain that particular love which he felt on earth for his relatives and friends according to the degree of kindred, friendship and association in which he was bound to them; or if the love of friends on earth resulted from benefits mutually bestowed on each other, or from the circumstance that both were of the same country and labored together in the same vocation, their love in heaven will remain the same forever as it was on earth. And mark well what more he adds, "No motive of pure love will dis-

appear from the hearts of the Blessed." (*Summa* II. 26, 13.) The desire of enjoying the intercourse of those whom we love is so natural, that God Himself makes it a part of the reward of His faithful servants.

382. The assurance of being reunited with our dear ones in the next world is consolation so pure and sweet, that even the saints found their delight in this thought. One evening St. Theresa was suffering from an attack of illness. She had recourse to her rosary, because she thought herself unable to make her usual meditation. She herself relates what followed: "Scarcely had a few moments passed, when I was rapt in ecstacy and borne in spirit to heaven. The first persons I noticed there were my father and my mother." St. Francis of Sales once consoled a person deeply affected at the death of a friend, as follows: "Do not scruple to repeat for your consolation, 'She has not forgotten me. She watches over me; we remain united.'" Fenelon, archbishop of Cambray, said for his own consolation and for that of others, "Because our senses have lost the object of our affection, we imagine that this object is really and forever lost to us. But this is not so. The one whom we no longer see, is with us more than ever. He sees us; he knows our infirmities better than we do ourselves, having put away his own. He implores for us their removal. He loves us and is concerned for our wants. How happy am I that I can address him and open to him my heart!" What powerful consolation is contained in these words!

383. Knowing that we can continue this loving intercourse with our dear departed ones, must this knowledge not increase our piety? The remembrance

here on earth of a distant friend is often sufficient to drive away trouble and sorrow and even temptation: how much more comforting and salutary must it be for our souls to know that we can still have intercourse with those of whom we fondly hope that they are face to face with God, or of whom we can at least be sure that this is their certain destiny even though at present they may be undergoing punishment? A pious author writes: "Have a record made of your departed ones, and read it at least once a year, or better still, once a week, in order that you may be reminded to pray for them and to commend them to God's mercy, if they should still be in need of it. You will thereby increase your desire to be reunited with them in heaven, and thus you will renew your zeal and piety." St. Francis Xavier made it a practice to invoke those of the deceased with whom he had been acquainted in life. He recommended to them his undertakings; he regarded them as protectors, and declared that he often profited by their prayers. St. Louis Bertrand invoked his deceased friends in the form of a litany.

384. In the paragraph on the location of Purgatory we mentioned that some souls are privileged to suffer their punishment in certain places here on earth. They are often with us in our rooms, in church, on the streets; they follow us wherever we go. And even though they may not always be near us on account of being detained in the depth of Purgatory, we may be sure they are with us in thought, invoking our aid and at the same time praying for us, just as we remember our distant friends and share their joys and sorrows. Oh, let us then, in times of trial and sorrow, remem-

ber the Poor Souls in Purgatory and offer up for them our sufferings, adding some little act of self denial or mortification; thereby we shall greatly benefit both them as well as ourselves. O, yes, we gladly believe the consoling doctrine that in the next world we shall know our own. Parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters—all will there know each other again; they will be united again in mutual love as they were once united on earth. One friend will there know the other; the priest will know his former co-laborer in the priesthood; the confessor will know his former penitent and the penitent his former confessor. O, consoling thought, so strongly encouraging us to persevere in our supplications for the dead!

385. In His all-wise Providence God invested our food with certain qualities that render it pleasant to our taste, in order that we might partake of it more willingly and so receive the nourishment which it is intended we should draw from it. The same is true with regard to our spiritual profit. God ingrafted the love of kindred into our hearts to the end, that by purely, justly and truly loving one another we might draw nearer to Him; and thus make His interests identical with our own and those of our neighbor. Many a husband avoids intemperance for the sake of his wife; sometimes a person strives to lead a pure life thereby to please a friend: and in doing so they fulfil the will of God. "Owe no man anything, but to love one another, for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. For: thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; thou shalt not covet. And if there be any other commandment it is comprised in

this word: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The love of our neighbor worketh no evil. Love therefore is the fulfilling of the law." (Rom. XIII. 8—10.) "In godliness, love of brotherhood; and in love of brotherhood, charity. For if these things be with you, and abound, they will make you to be neither empty nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he that hath not these things with him is blind, and groping, having forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." (II Pet. I. 7—9.)

386. If from pure charity for the Suffering Souls we observe God's commandments, will He not reward us for this charity? God loves these souls and has prepared for them the crown of immortality; and He sees that we regard this charity as the summit of Christian perfection, that we have elected it as the means of serving Him better ourselves, and of promoting His glory by the release of the souls whose entrance into heaven we hasten. The souls in Purgatory are the most distressed part of the mystical body of Christ. If our Lord sees us moved with special compassion for this part of His body, have we not reason to believe that He will grant His love and favor in return? If the lion, from whose foot a thorn was drawn, was grateful to his benefactor and followed and protected him, will not our Savior also show His gratitude to us for our devotion to the suffering members of His mystical body? We may rest assured that if we satisfy His justice so as to make it unnecessary for Him to continue the punishment of souls so dear to Him, He will reward us for this act of charity.

387. St. Dionysius the Carthusian writes of St. Gertrude: "This holy virgin was accustomed to offer

up fervently every morning all the merits she would gain during the day by her prayers, good works, penances and sufferings. To render this act still more pleasing to God, she one day implored Him to show her the souls that suffered the greatest torments in order that she might relieve them. Her prayer was heard, and our Lord pointed out to her in their successive order the souls she wished to see. Thenceforth she redoubled her zeal and suffrages for their relief, persevering till she received the consoling intelligence of their release. Many of these souls appeared to her in glory, thanking her and promising to remember her in heaven. Finally, when after many years of this charitable practice she herself was on her death-bed, the evil spirits sought to frighten her with the thought that now, having given away all her good works and merits, she must appear empty-handed before her Eternal Judge, and that accordingly she would have to undergo a rigorous Purgatory. And she was greatly distressed at this thought. Her Divine Spouse appeared to her and asked why she was so discouraged. She answered, 'My dear Lord, as I am about to die, I am troubled at having no good works with which to atone for my guilt, since I have offered them all for the relief of the faithful departed.' Our Lord sweetly consoled her, saying, 'Gertrude, my daughter! That thou mayest know how well pleased I was at thy great love for the Suffering Souls, I grant thee in reward thereof full remission of all punishment that thou wouldst otherwise have had to suffer. And as I have promised to reward a hundredfold all good works, I will moreover reward thee far beyond thy merits, and increase thy glory in heaven. I will order the souls that thou

hast released from Purgatory to meet thee at thy death, to receive thy soul, and to conduct it gratefully to heaven."

388. O salutary effects of prayer for the dead! Convinced of this, Christian soul, what is your resolution for the future?—Let us henceforth redouble our prayers, our good works, our exercises of penance; let us increase our zeal in attending and offering up the Holy Sacrifice, in gaining indulgences—all this to open for many, many souls the gates of their fiery prison, and to facilitate their speedy entrance into heaven.—How happy we shall be! We shall populate heaven with new saints—and thereby the glory of God will be increased; we shall gain for ourselves new advocates and intercessors, and all heaven will be interested in our welfare. The holy guardian angels will thank us for releasing their clients; the Blessed Virgin, for assisting her servants to gain their heavenly glory; Jesus Christ, for applying the merits of His atoning death; our Heavenly Father, for rendering effective His plan of redemption. And having thus gained the favor of all heaven, we may confidently hope to obtain more efficient and abundant graces here below; and when we have crossed the boundary of this life, we may expect to receive, after a short and easy Purgatory, the reward prepared for us in heaven, consisting in the everlasting enjoyment of Divine Love in the beatific vision of an infinitely glorious God.

Such are the motives relating to ourselves which should induce us to practice charity for the Suffering Souls.

§ 56. Motives Relating to this Devotion Itself.

389. Devotion to the Suffering Souls is essentially the exercise of the love of God and our neighbor, sometimes in a heroic degree. Its pre-eminence over other devotions is due to the fact that it leads us to the fulfilment of our duties towards God and man. This devotion tends in many different ways to the one end, namely our reconcilation with God by contrition, confession and amendment. Consequently it will help to ground us in the fear of God; it will increase our piety; it will lead us to perform good works without number. For this reason Faber, a great promoter of charity for the Suffering Souls, calls this devotion as it were the centre in which all forms of Catholic devotion unite. He maintains that it fosters all virtues in an eminent degree, particularly the three theological virtues; that it comprises all our duties towards God, and is more conducive to our progress in spiritual life than any other devotion.—This being so, let us now consider the spirit of this devotion in its various expressions and manifestations, and thence adduce new and powerful motives in its favor.

390. The spirit of this devotion, says Faber, promotes the exercise of the theological virtues.—Faith, hope and charity are virtues upon which depends our eternal salvation; virtues without which all other virtues and good works are of no meritorious value; virtues which alone insure our perseverance in the path of justice. Hence it follows that we should often make the acts of these virtues, in order that they may be continually revived in us and exert their salutary influence on our actions. As often as we make

the acts of these virtues, we so to say add fuel to the fire. As natural fire increases in strength through the adding of fuel, so also are these virtues revived and strengthened by repeated acts; and thus they incite us to walk before God in the path of virtue. Holy Church therefore makes it obligatory on us often to make the acts of faith, hope and charity. This may be done explicitly or implicitly. It is done explicitly by using a certain formula of words; it is done implicitly if we say a prayer or perform an action in which the exercise of these virtues is included. For example, if we assist at Holy Mass we implicitly make an act of faith; if we pray for a happy death, this prayer is implicitly an act of hope; if we perform good works for the love of God, we implicitly make an act of charity. By this implicit exercise of the theological virtues we sufficiently comply with our Christian duty. Devotion to the Suffering Souls continually presents opportunities for doing so.

391. In order to be saved Jews and heathens had to receive the faith of Jesus Christ. Our Lord commanded the Apostles: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned." (Mark xvi. 15, 16.) Hence the Apostles and their successors always preached the Gospel with the greatest zeal, despite the most cruel and bloody persecutions. Millions of martyrs sacrificed everything, even life itself, for the faith; and the Catholic Church has continued through nineteen centuries delivering to the succeeding generations the very same faith that she originally received from her Divine Founder. This faith is exer-

cised by the devotion to the souls in Purgatory. This devotion shows us the existence of a place of punishment and purification after death; it urges us through our belief in the communion of saints to aid these souls, in order that they may gain eternal glory through the mercy of Jesus Christ, that they may be eternally rewarded by their Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier; it fosters our belief in the efficacy of the Holy Sacrifice of Mass and of the sacraments, as also our faith in the power of the keys with which the Church is invested. This devotion therefore comprises more than any other all the articles of faith.

392. But this devotion also embraces everything that we must hope for. Christian hope is a divinely infused virtue, by which we confidently expect to receive through the merits of Christ whatever was promised us by God. Now God promised us eternal salvation and all that is necessary for its attainment, namely remission of sin and a sufficiency of grace. He also promised us temporal goods in so far as they may be necessary for us and are no obstacle to our salvation. Indispensably necessary for salvation is the remission of sin, because faith teaches us that nothing defiled can enter heaven. If it is an article of faith that God desires the salvation of all, then it logically follows that He is willing to forgive us our sins. Besides He explicitly declares and affirms that He will forgive them. Thus He says through His prophet, "And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against Me; and I will forgive all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned against Me and despised Me." (Jerem. xxx. 8.) In the Gospel we read that Jesus Christ during His

life on earth repeatedly forgave sins: to Mary Magdalen, to Peter, to the Good Thief. He also instituted two sacraments, Baptism and Penance, for the remission of sins, in order that men at all times might be cleansed from both original and actual sin. We can and must therefore confidently hope for the forgiveness of our sins.

393. Even the number and grievousness of our sins must not deter us from this hope. God expressly assures us, "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow; and if they be as crimson, they shall be white as wool." (Isai. 1. 18.)—In his "Glories of Mary," St. Alphonsus Liguori relates the following: In the place where the venerable Sister Catherine of St. Augustine dwelt there lived a woman by the name of Mary, who had led a dissolute life from youth to her old age, so that the inhabitants finally drove her out of the town. She took up her abode in a cave in the country, where she soon died without the sacraments and abandoned by all. She was buried in the open field, for she had died of a most loathsome disease. Sister Catherine, who was a fervent helper of the Suffering Souls, did not remember this poor sinner in her prayers, because like the rest she thought she was in hell. But four years later, when Catherine was one day engaged in prayer, a soul from Purgatory appeared to her, saying, 'Sister Catherine, how miserable am I! You pray for all the departed, for me alone you have no pity.' The servant of God asked, 'Who are you?' —The soul replied, 'I am the poor woman Mary, who died in the cave. Through the mercy of the Blessed Virgin I was saved. For in my last moments, when I saw myself abandoned by all the world because of

my ungodly and wicked life, I said to her from all my heart: Thou refuge of the abandoned, have mercy on me. Thou art my only hope, assist me! And my prayer was not in vain: through Mary's intercession I obtained the grace of true contrition and thereby escaped hell. Even my punishment was abbreviated on condition of its greater intensity. Do have some Masses said for me; for then I shall be released from Purgatory, and I promise that I will pray for you in heaven.' Catherine had the Masses said, and a few days later the soul appeared to her in great splendor, thanking her for her release."

Nobody should despair on account of his sins. For, "where sin abounded, grace did more abound." (Rom. v. 20.) Our prayers, exercises and good works all rest on filial confidence in God, which is the supernatural motive of Christian hope. We hope for mercy for the Suffering Souls because we pray for them; we hope for mercy for ourselves because we are merciful to them; and because we rely on the goodness of God and His promises we yield to them our merits, indulgences, etc. These are heroic acts of hope, and by hope we are saved. "Hope confoundeth not." (Rom. v. 5.)

394. Charity also is exercised in a particular manner by devotion to the souls in Purgatory, because by it we manifest our love towards those whom God loves, since we help these souls to attain their supreme good. Every soul in Purgatory is a beloved spouse of Jesus Christ to whom He was espoused by shedding His Most Precious Blood on the cross. "And I will betroth Me to thee forever" (Osee, II. 19.), He says by His prophet to the soul of every Christian, but on condition that he remain faithful to Him till the end of

his life. With the faithful departed this condition is fulfilled; the union is secured for all eternity. No earthly bridegroom can long so fervently for union with his beloved as Jesus Christ desires to be united with the souls redeemed in His Blood. But they had strayed from the right path, they had made themselves guilty of venial faults for which they have not sufficiently atoned; and therefore they fell under the ban of justice, and are now detained in prison. Their Divine Spouse hears them lamenting and sighing in their captivity, but His mercy is restrained by His justice.

395. Our love for this Divine Spouse of the Suffering Souls urges us to unite our suffrages with His merits for the release of these holy prisoners from their captivity, so that they may see Him face to face and unite their praises and thanksgivings with those of all the heavens. By thus complying with the ordinances of Jesus we honor His merits and atonements; we imitate the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints in their ineffable love for the Suffering Souls, and in so doing we please God. It is a property of love to seek the complacency of the beloved; hence the true servant of God knows no greater misfortune than to offend God even by the least fault or imperfection. And convinced that we can please God only by fulfilling His divine will, it is our sincere desire always to accomplish it. As often as we repeat in the "Our Father" the words—"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," we renew our purpose of fulfilling the will of God as perfectly and as joyously as the angels and saints in heaven fulfill it; and we express our resolution to desire only what God wills. Because

God so ardently desires the deliverance of the Suffering Souls, we scrupulously observe His commandments and perform good works to the full extent of our ability; for faith teaches us that we thereby aid in releasing the Suffering Souls; and thus we prove our love of God by devotion to these souls.

396. Devotion to the Suffering Souls, however, not only incites us to make acts of faith, hope and charity, and thus to fulfil one of the first duties of religion; but it facilitates to a great extent the performance of our other duties towards God and the saints. No Suffering Soul is consoled or receives the least mitigation of punishment but the glory of God and the honor of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ are increased. How great, then, this glory and honor when a soul is fully released!—Whosoever truly loves God must of necessity be filled with inexpressible sorrow that His adorable majesty receives so little glory, so little love, and is so often offended. Hence what a consolation to know that our neglect of this duty—namely that of loving and glorifying God—is repaired by other souls—pure and holy souls. While we are occupied with eating, drinking and sleeping; while we are trudging wearily under our burden of labor and trouble; and while, alas, our spiritual life is a continual changing between sin and repentance—what a comforting and reassuring thought it is to know that one or more souls in heaven owe to us the hastening of their bliss; that now they are singing in our stead the praises of God, and will continue to do so forever; and that they find their greatest happiness in the perfect accomplishment of the divine will.

397. By devotion to the Suffering Souls the glory of God is increased not only in heaven, but also on earth. The sacred humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ is particularly honored through the practice of this devotion. By His bitter passion and death Christ achieved our redemption; and it is by His merits that we desire to accomplish the deliverance of the Suffering Souls.—Our Lord one day showed to the Venerable Frances of the Blessed Sacrament a number of souls in the terrible state of mortal sin, and He said to her sorrowfully, "Behold these unfortunates! How they even now appear to the whole invisible world so horribly deformed by sin! They shall be obliged to suffer for all eternity if they are not converted. Behold them, these sinners, who do not profit by My so precious and bitter passion and death, who do not seek reconciliation in My Most Precious Blood. Pray for them, that they may learn to know their terrible and dangerous condition, that they may return to Me by true repentance. Ask Me also to favor them with additional grace."—By devotion to the Suffering Souls we do so continually; that is, we pray for this additional grace for those whose souls are in danger of being lost.

398. In the village of Amettes in France there is a plain but very neat church, in which there is a chapel dedicated to the Suffering Souls. On the altar is a picture showing how the fruits of Holy Mass are applied to the souls in Purgatory. The priest at the altar is represented in the act of elevating the Sacred Host, while at the same time the Precious Blood of our Redeemer is streaming from His five wounds on the souls suffering in the purifying flames. The

holy angels receive the souls purified by the atoning Blood, and conduct them to the mansions of eternal bliss. It was about the middle of the eighteenth century that a devout boy was seen kneeling before this picture. His name is Benedict Joseph Labre. With wondering, innocent eyes he regards the pious representation; his lips move in prayer, and his flaming cheeks are an earnest of his fervor. Every morning he may be seen serving the priest's Mass at the altar. And, oh, how that picture inspires him with pity for the Suffering Souls! How fervently he unites with the priest during consecration, offering with him the Precious Blood for the captives of Divine Justice! What the picture so often and impressively reminds him of, he now beholds accomplished in mysterious reality in Holy Mass: he sees our Savior, and he ardently implores Him to offer to His Heavenly Father in ransom for the Suffering Souls the Precious Blood that flowed from His sacred wounds.

399. A beautiful homage of an innocent child to the sacred humanity of our Lord! But thanks to God! a homage by no means singular or extraordinary. Millions of faithful Christians, saints and sinners, did the same for centuries; and there are millions who do it to-day. Do not thousands every day visit the stations of the cross, devoutly following our Divine Redeemer step for step in the path of His suffering, and offering His merits for the release of the Poor Souls? Is His most sacred humanity not honored by the spiritual pouring-out of His Precious Blood for the relief of the Souls in Purgatory? The innocence, the infinite perfections of Jesus Christ are offered as a compensation for their sins and imperfections; His life of

self-denial—a life of fasting, prayer, labor, contempt, suffering and persecution—is offered for their want of mortification; His stripes and torments, His tears and bloody sweat and agony are offered to relieve their pains; the merits of His virtues are offered as an endowment for their needful souls—all this is offered for the souls in Purgatory; and is not the sacred humanity of our Lord highly honored by this offering?

400. Our Lord appeared to Sister Mary and granted her the favor of relieving four souls from Purgatory after every holy communion. When she expressed her astonishment at so extraordinary a privilege, He replied, "Be not astonished, but know that all those who are to be released by you, when compared with the number of those who remain, are like a drop of water compared with a mighty stream." Thenceforth she was anxious to receive communion every day.—And in her fervent practice of offering holy communion for the Suffering Souls Sister Mary has thousands of followers to-day. They implore God to grant that the Most Holy Eucharist may bring comfort and deliverance to the Suffering Souls; that the Sacred Heart of Jesus mysteriously present in the Blessed Sacrament may offer for them all its aspirations, its acts of homage and supplication, all its incomprehensible mysteries. They receive holy communion sacramentally as often as possible, and spiritually whenever sacramental reception is impossible—and all these holy communions, sacramental and spiritual, are offered for the Suffering Souls. They flock to the altars to offer up or at least to assist at the Holy Sacrifice for the release of the captive souls from their fiery prison; they apply to them the privilege of the altar

and innumerable other plenary and partial indulgences.—What is all this but a homage, an adoration of our Divine Lord and Savior inspired by devotion to the Suffering Souls?

401. The full plenitude of divine grace is contained in the holy sacraments. They are the stars in this our world of darkness, the fountains in the desert of life, miracles of divine love, marvels of Christ's mercy. Their essential effect is the removal of the guilt of sin and the sanctification of the soul by grace. The sacrifice of the cross, renewed daily in Holy Mass, is the fountain-head whence the sacraments conduct to the souls of men seven powerful streams of grace; and by this same sacrifice of the cross these streams are daily replenished and placed at our disposal. The sacramentals, too, are helps to salvation, but in a less powerful and in an essentially different manner. Their object is to remove and to destroy, at least in some measure, not only the spiritual but also the physical effects of sin. Like the sacraments they are intimately connected with Christ, the fountain-head of grace, whence they receive their heeling power. Now, if we Catholics are most earnestly intent on applying to the Suffering Souls, as far as possible, the graces of the sacraments and sacramentals; if we reconcile ourselves with God in the sacrament of Penance and are thus reinstated in His grace; if we then piously make use of blessed candles, holy water, oil, etc., for the relief of the Suffering Souls—is not the sacred humanity of Christ specially honored and worshiped by this devotion to the Holy Souls?

402. That the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus, receives particular joy and honor by this devo-

tion is evident from the three titles under which we love to invoke her, namely that of Mother of Jesus, by which she shares the honors of His sacred humanity; that of Mother of mercy, under which she is specially honored by works of charity; and finally that of Queen of Purgatory, under which she is invoked as the special patroness and helper of the Holy Souls. We may also regard her as the Queen of martyrs, and offer up her sorrows as such for the relief of the Suffering Souls; and as we thereby undoubtedly remind her of the greatest affliction of her maternal heart, moving it to perform wonders of pity and mercy, it will prove to be of extraordinary efficacy, if we offer the sorrows of Mary for the relief of the Suffering Souls.

403. It is this very efficacy of her intercession for the Suffering Souls which moves the faithful to have a particular devotion to Mary. In the life of St. Dominic we read: Alexandra, a young lady of noble birth, was resuscitated to life by the saint, that she might be able to receive the holy sacraments; for she had died without them. On returning to life she made known that she had died in the state of grace, but was sentenced to Purgatory; first, for two hundred years because of a sin, which through her fault had been committed by some other person; secondly, for five hundred years because of her vanity in dress, through which she often caused impure thoughts in others. However, being a member of the Confraternity of the Rosary, she hoped to be released sooner through the prayers of her associates. After this revelation she again died. St. Dominic prayed fervently and perseveringly with the members of the Rosary Confraternity, and had the consolation to see Alexandra

again after fifteen days in heavenly splendor, thanking him for her release.—Therefore let us also endeavor to liberate the Suffering Souls from their torments by having recourse for this purpose to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To our daily prayers to her let us add also one or the other for the relief of the souls in Purgatory; particularly let us often say the rosary in her honor and offer it up for these souls. Thus is the honor of Mary increased by devotion to the Holy Souls.

404. The same is true of our veneration for the Holy Angels. There is no doubt that the guardian angels rejoice, and with them the whole heavenly court, if we help to increase the number of those who dwell in the heavenly Jerusalem, thereby filling the empty thrones of the fallen angels. The angels regard with particular favor the souls already assured of their salvation and confirmed in perseverance, though as yet these souls are not sufficiently purified to take possession of the blissful abode prepared for them. Many of them also have a special interest in these souls, having been their guardian angels on earth, and still exercising that office.—We read in the life of Blessed Cecilia Lampugnana, that three days after her death she appeared and made known that she received the consolations of her guardian angel, and that he appeared to her visibly in Purgatory. She added that she intended to ask him for a particular favor; namely, that he would apply in her stead to the priest of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, and request him to say Masses for her, whereby she would be greatly relieved.—It is also related of a young man who once went to sleep without saying his usual rosary for the

Suffering Souls, that he was called by his guardian angel and reminded of the omission.—St. Michael the archangel is the prince of Purgatory. He receives the suffrages of the faithful and brings them to the throne of God for the relief of the Suffering Souls, whom he conducts to the throne of God after their release—an office of which the Church makes special mention in the Offertory of the Mass for the Dead.—Thus the angels receive increased honor by this devotion.

405. The Saints also experience new joy every time their number is increased by the addition of a released soul. The saints in heaven are God's household, His family. Once they were living on earth, but after their death they were transplanted into heaven. Mary is their Mother there as she is ours here. They rejoice at our good works, the more so, if thereby their number is augmented; and this joy is doubly great if they find their clients among the new arrivals in heaven. Although the essential happiness of heaven consists in the vision and eternal possession of God, yet they receive an additional happiness from the knowledge that those who were devoted to them on earth are now united with them in heaven. If by our prayers we effect the release of the Suffering Souls, and thereby increase the number of the saints in heaven, do we not also by the same means increase their heavenly joy? And hence is it not evident that by this devotion to the souls in Purgatory we promote the honor and glory of the saints?

406. In heaven one class of saints—martyrs, virgins, confessors, religious, fathers, mothers, etc.—is distinct from the other, every class receiving additional joy and glory from the faithful performance of

the particular duties of their state, for which they extend to one another their mutual congratulations. In the Suffering Souls, already confirmed in grace, they behold the fruit of their example, the granting of their prayers, the result of their protecting influence. Many a holy patron sees how his client is being perfected in the cleansing flames. These souls were their zealous disciples on earth; they celebrated their feasts in holy rejoicing; they proclaimed their words and deeds to the world. Even in death they united the names of their patrons with the saving names of Jesus and Mary, to repel the attacks of the evil spirits in that all-important hour. Why then should these saints not regard with compassion their clients in the cleansing flames? And is it not obvious that our prayers for the release of the Suffering Souls are a source of joy to the saints, redounding to their honor, because we thereby hasten their clients' entrance into heaven?

407. Hence it is not saying too much, if we call the devotion to the souls in Purgatory in a certain sense the centre of all Catholic devotions, which comprises more than any other the whole compass of our duties towards God, the angels and men. All other devotions, too, find their common centre in this one devotion, as we intend to prove.

The special devotions of all confraternities can be applied for the benefit of the Suffering Souls; hence the numerous distinct fraternities established for this one purpose—to relieve and ransom the Suffering Souls. This is the object and statutory addition to the titles of the following pious confraternities: The Confraternity of the Most Holy Trinity; the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood; the Confra-

ternity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; the Archconfraternity of Perpetual Adoration of the Holy Ghost; the Archconfraternity of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament under the protection of St. Benedict; the Association of the Communion of Reparation; the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; the Confraternity of the Rosary; the Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary for the conversion of sinners; the Archconfraternity of St. Joseph; the Confraternity of St. Michael; the Confraternity of the Cord of St. Francis; the Society of St. Francis Xavier for the conversion of sinners; the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, etc., etc.

408. By the active and effective assistance of the Suffering Souls, as described in the course of these treatises, the three divisions of the kingdom of God, the Church militant, the Church triumphant and the Church suffering, are most intimately united in mutual charity. Our faith in the communion of saints is thereby increased to a degree incomprehensible to those outside the Church. This devotion leads us to the inexhaustible treasury of indulgences, and gives its key into our hands. It makes lucid the abstruse doctrine of atonement. From the treasury of atonement we may take abundant satisfaction and thereby give consolation to innumerable Suffering Souls, thus insuring intercession and gratitude to ourselves. In heaven we increase joy at the additional conquests of the Most Precious Blood; the realm of bliss is populated with new saints confirmed in justice and joining Mary, the angels and saints in eternal thanksgiving. The Church militant rejoices at the increased number of her protectors. "Relatives," says Faber, "friends,

the family, the community, the country have special cause to rejoice." Nature itself is honored, for a creature has entered the bliss of the Creator and joins forever in His praises.

409. Devotion to the Suffering Souls is not restricted to words and sentiment, but essentially urges and demands action.—St. Benedict Joseph Labre, the holy mendicant of Amettes, though abandoning home and leading the life of a pilgrim, bears in his mind the impress of that picture in the church of his village home before which he had so often prayed in youth, and his fervor for the release of the Suffering Souls is ever on the increase. On his weary path from sanctuary to sanctuary he thinks of their torments, compared with which his sufferings from hunger, thirst, exposure and contempt are as nothing. Remembering the yearning of these souls for spiritual refreshment in the fiery furnace, for peace and rest on the bosom of their God, he redoubles his charities and penances to satisfy Divine Justice for them. Sweet and easy are to him the rigors of austere self-denial, because he is permitted to unite them with the merits of Him whose sufferings were infinitely greater, and to offer them in suffrage for the Holy Souls.

410. The holy mendicant, however, was not content to devote himself and his whole life to the relief of the Suffering Souls. He also did his utmost to incite others to follow his example. A great lover of silence and humble reserve, St. Benedict Joseph became eloquent in defense and inculcation of his favorite devotion. One day he remarked, "We ought to have three hearts united into one; the first replete with the love of God, the second overflowing with

charity towards our neighbor, the third full of rigor towards ourselves. The heart overflowing with charity must urge us to implore Jesus and Mary to receive the Suffering Souls into the mansions of eternal bliss." Oh, that the hearts of all Christians were of this description! But, alas, of a great many the contrary is true. Their hearts overflow with indulgence to themselves and are full of rigor towards their neighbor. But it is also true that devotion to the souls in Purgatory has wrought a change in many a heart, filling such Christians with charity towards their neighbor, and with rigor towards themselves. Hence such persons no longer decline to make sacrifices, to perform acts of self-denial and charity, and to offer prayers for the relief of the souls in Purgatory.

411. Following the example of St. Benedict Joseph, all good Catholics are fervent helpers of the souls in Purgatory, constantly eager to perform works of charity for their aid. Says Faber, "Behold how all the corporal works of mercy are practiced by devotion to the Holy Souls. It nourishes the famished souls with the Bread of Angels; it allays their thirst with the refreshing draught of our Lord's Precious Blood; it clothes them with heavenly glory; it consoles them in their infirmities by visiting them with help; it releases the captives from bonds more galling than death and gives them the liberty of heavenly bliss; it harbors strangers and hastens their admission to the haven of eternal rest; it buries the dead in the bosom of Jesus, their reward exceeding great. Oh, on the last day, when those seven questions on the works of mercy will be asked by our Lord, how happy will he be, and if he were the poorest mendicant who never

gave an alms because he had to beg himself, when he sees himself eloquently defended by numbers of Holy Souls to whom he was merciful during their captivity."

412. What comfort and consolation is to be derived from this thought: I have released a soul from Purgatory; I have performed works of mercy in its favor and thereby hastened its entrance into heaven! Will the soul thus benefited not continually implore God, "Save him who released me"? This consideration impels us to perform the spiritual and corporal works of mercy also for our fellow-men here on earth. In the ages of faith the weekly and yearly foundations of Masses, made for all times and sometimes in several churches, were joined with works of mercy, such as distributing food and giving clothes to the poor, assisting the sick and aged, etc. In addition to these corporal works of mercy, the spiritual works also were performed: sinners were corrected, the ignorant were instructed, enemies were reconciled, prayers were offered for the living and the dead. Thus devotion to the Suffering Souls embraces all good works. It does more; it redoubles our zeal, incites us to works of supererogation, and prompts us to influence others by word and example to give alms and to pray for the faithful departed.

413. A remarkable document was drawn up by William, Duke of Aquitania, and founder of the Benedictine Abbey of Clugny. After a short preamble on making good use of wealth he says, "Be it known to all Christians now living and to live in future generations, that I, Duke William, and my Consort, Duchess Engeberga, for the love of our God and Savior Jesus Christ, have donated and do donate by these presents

our estate of Clugny, on the banks of the Rhone, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul. We make this gift, first, for the pure love of God; then for the repose of the soul of my father, for the repose of the souls of my mother and of my aunt Avana, by whose last will this estate was devised to me; finally for the salvation of my own and my consort's soul, for the salvation of my brothers and sisters, of my whole household, and of all my subjects. And whereas all the faithful are united by one bond of charity, we offer this estate of Clugny for all the faithful that ever lived, that now live and ever shall live to the end of the world, as an oblation to God, and hereby declare our will that a monastery of the rule of St. Benedict shall immediately be built on it." The document was written in the year 910, and is signed by Duke William and his wife, two bishops and several witnesses.—It is only one of many others on record, all of which documents are of similar import.

414. The objection that the wealthy alone are able to secure help in Purgatory for themselves and their relatives, is untenable for the reason, as was shown at length elsewhere, that confraternities and unions make it possible since the earliest times for even the poorest to give their mite for this purpose and so to secure for themselves a share of the suffrages for the deceased. In Catholic countries the records of old churches almost everywhere give evidence of the foundation of Masses and prayers for all classes: for the deceased of the various guilds, for deceased priests, for young men and maidens, for parents, for children. This securing of charity for the deceased is made so easily attainable, that it might almost seem as though individuals were

relieved of their private obligations in this regard. But this is not so. For devotion to the souls in Purgatory makes personal and individual charity towards the deceased obligatory. True, others also pray for our deceased; but will they do it with the same zeal and devotion as we ourselves, who were so closely united with them and are indebted to them for so many personal favors? Personal obligations cannot be fulfilled by proxy. Our own prayer united with that of others—this is what is pleasing to God.

415. The devotion to the Suffering Souls enkindles our zeal for the performance of our religious duties; but more than this, it also exerts a beneficial influence on the fulfilment of the duties of our state of life. The trials and troubles inseparable from our daily labor—how insignificant will they seem to him before whose spiritual vision looms up the flame of that fiery furnace where the Suffering Souls are held captive? Faith tells him that many souls are sentenced to Purgatory for their neglect of duty. When the Venerable Frances of the Blessed Sacrament was occupied with her daily work, she would often see herself surrounded by souls from Purgatory who plaintively informed her of their sufferings and implored her help. Amongst others a Cardinal appeared to her twice; and after telling her his name and rank he asked her to pray for him; and he concluded saying, "Oh, that I had been a simple lay-brother in a convent! For the duties and responsibilities of a prince of the Church are exceedingly grave; and because I have not been as attentive to some of my duties as I might have been, I am now in the torments of expiation."—A priest, too, who had been connected with the Church of St. Andrew at

Soria, appeared to her and said, "I suffer frightful torments because I sometimes offended against temperance and moderation, thus depriving myself of the means of aiding good works." And he added sorrowfully, "O Frances, people often think it all-sufficient to be a priest; but know that the priesthood is so sublime a state, a state of such responsibility, and so highly esteemed by God and heaven, that it obligates its members to the greatest purity of conscience and to great perfection. I may tell you that I scarcely succeeded in working out my salvation."

416. The motives inherent in the spirit of the devotion to the Suffering Souls are therefore so strong that they urge us to be magnanimous and constant in our efforts for the relief and deliverance of the Holy Souls. The benefits of this charity are unlimited; its effects extend not only to the souls in Purgatory, but also to heaven and earth. Those who engage in this work of charity are themselves greatly benefited by it. Hence we append in conclusion of this chapter a quotation from Faber: "Were I to demonstrate in particular how this devotion unites the three objects: promotion of the glory of God, of the interests of Jesus, and of the salvation of souls, I should only repeat what I have already said. This devotion's special character is fecundity; it is of supernatural efficacy and extends everywhere. In it we strike a secret source of greater profusion and power than we expected. It is like an instrument whose strings are attuned harmoniously to proclaim the glory of God: if one of them is touched, they all join in the melodious strain of praise that forever ascends from the Sacred Heart of Jesus to the Most Holy Trinity."

Considering all this, must our hearts not tremble with thankful emotion? Must we not wonderingly exclaim: O great and holy devotion to the Suffering Souls! Pearls of great price are enclosed in it—pearls of living faith, of firm confidence, of love of God and neighbor. Oh, let us prove our faith by works! "Faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself." (James II. 7.) "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (Matth. V. 7.)

CHAPTER V.

Gratitude of the Suffering Souls.

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§ 57. The Suffering Souls Show Their Gratitude by Praying for Their Benefactors.

417. Our Divine Redeemer exhorts us, "Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings." (Luke XVI. 9.) The souls of the faithful whom we deliver from the depths of misery and lead to supreme bliss by means of the "mammon of iniquity," become our most grateful friends and incessantly implore God to shower upon us His choicest blessings and bounties. We cannot but believe that they will remember us in heaven with the greatest gratitude. Or would we dare to accuse the saints of that base ingratitude which we sometimes experience at the hands of men here below, where,

alas, ingratitude is nothing unusual? Our Divine Savior Himself experienced it. "Were not ten made clean, and where are the nine?" (Luke XVII. 17.) Since and before that time ingratitude was and is still of daily occurrence here on earth. But in heaven where nothing defiled enters this vice has no place. There charity reigns supreme, and base ingratitude is banished forever.

418. From this we may conclude with what gratitude all those souls will intercede for us, whose admission to heaven we have hastened by our suffrages. As gratitude demands that benefits be returned with benefits—will they permit that our prayers which obtained for them so great a boon shall surpass theirs in fervor? As we came to their aid so charitably when they were unable to do anything for their own relief, will they desert us of whose needs they are so well aware? As wayfarers on earth they observed the law of Christ—they loved even their enemies, doing good to them that hated them; and now that they are in heaven, will they not love their most active friends, to whose charity they owe the hastening of their bliss, and prove this love by constant intercession for them? St. Alphonsus Liguori says, "Whosoever comes to the aid of these distressed souls, so dear to our Lord, may confidently hope to be saved; for if such a soul is released through his prayer and good works, it prays incessantly for his salvation, and God will not refuse to hear His spouse." Bishop Colmar of Mayence, a great friend of the Holy Souls, remarks: "If I could know for certain that I had the happiness of releasing one of those souls, all my dread and fear of eternity would vanish; I should regard my salva-

tion as assured. For such a soul could not witness me going to perdition without imploring mercy for me so fervently that the Lord would grant me His mercy."

419. The Suffering Souls in Purgatory do not wait until they arrive in heaven to give evidence of their gratitude to their benefactors. Even while suffering the most dreadful torments they are anxious to return their charity; and hence they pray incessantly for the spiritual and temporal welfare of those who succored them. It is true St. Thomas teaches that the state of the Holy Souls is a higher one than ours, because it is no longer possible for them to commit sin. But their state may also be considered as being lower than ours, on account of the punishment they are obliged to suffer. Being in a state of suffering they are in a position rather to receive than to give help. The members of the Church suffering can no longer acquire merit, nor can they effectually make intercession for others. They must render atonement to Divine Justice "to the last farthing."—A drowning, a burning man's thoughts are centered too intently on his own dangers to be drawn to other occurrences around him. Thus the Suffering Souls are wholly occupied with their torments: "Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends; for the hand of the Lord hath touched me." (Job XIX. 21.) And as the souls in the prison of Purgatory do not as yet enjoy the vision of God, and are therefore not aware of our thoughts, desires and prayers, they are not in a position to act as intercessors for us, but they rather have need of our prayers.

420. This is the doctrine of St. Thomas. But as the Church has not dogmatically declared for or against this doctrine, the question, "Can the souls in Purgatory, while in the state of suffering, intercede for us with God?" is an open one. Theologians are divided on it, and the Church tolerates the opinions of both sides. And if we ask the religious sentiment of Catholics in general, this question is confidently answered with, "Yes!" Most commentators of St. Thomas declare that his doctrine does not conflict with this opinion. According to the opinion of the Angelic Doctor—and his opinion is the general one—the Suffering Souls are not official intercessors for the Church militant in the same sense as are the saints in heaven. Their position is not that of intercessors, but of beneficiaries for whom we ought to intercede; our position, as far as gaining merit and helping them is concerned, being preferable to theirs. Our prayer, addressed to God in the state of grace, is always heard, according to our Savior's own declaration, "If you shall ask Me anything in My name, that I will do." (John XIV. 14.) These words were addressed to the living, not to the dead.

421. According to St. Thomas it is the will of God that the inferior should be assisted by the superior. Since it is true that the souls in Purgatory, by reason of their captivity, are in a state inferior to ours, it might seem, because of this inferior state, that they can not pray for us. But as they are also in a state superior to ours, since they are beyond the possibility of committing sin, does it not follow that they *can* pray for us? It is not necessary that they should possess every claim in

order to be entitled to pray for us; it is sufficient that they possess one. Hence some followers of St. Thomas call the doctrine that the Suffering Souls can pray for us the common one. For as far as this second reason is concerned, they can be our intercessors the same as the saints in heaven, because they are in the grace and favor of God. Our motive of praying for the Suffering Souls should be rather a desire to help them, than to receive their help. It should be our principal object to pray for their aid and deliverance, rather than to obtain their assistance. But their condition is no obstacle to their prayer for us. Gregory of Valencia maintains that the souls in Purgatory pray for the faithful in general, but particularly for those who were very dear to them on earth. Bellarmine, Suarez, Sylvius, Gotti, Jungmann and many others are of the same opinion.

422. The renowned theologian Scheeben remarks on this question: "The souls in Purgatory being confirmed in charity, it seems not only probable, but evident that they actually pray. That is, they present petitions to God in favor of the Church militant, and particularly in favor of their benefactors; otherwise their charity would be powerless and inert. If here on earth we should and do pray for others, how much the more is it not to be expected of those Holy Souls! The state of grace, on which the intercession of the Suffering Souls depends as on its fructifying principle, is the very principle on which the prayer of all other just souls depends for its efficiency. Every just soul is a beloved friend of God. As the souls in Purgatory are no less friends of God than the just on earth, it would be a deflection from the order of grace if

their charity were disregarded and unrequited in the very acts which are especially pleasing to God. This deflection becomes still more apparent if the communion of saints is taken into consideration. This communion being the uniting bond of the mystic body of Christ, its unity must of necessity be like that of any organic body. This unity requires that every living member of the whole communion, each in his way, shall contribute by his ministrations to the welfare of the whole body; that consequently no living member shall act as the mere recipient of the benefactions of the rest, without himself being useful to the others; and particularly that he shall not receive favors from the other members without making a return to them by grateful reciprocation."

423. Continuing his argument Scheeben adds: "This last mentioned motive of gratitude is of special import. Its principle is recognized, because it is a doctrine universally taught in the Church that the Suffering Souls, at least after their entrance into heaven, efficiently remember at the throne of God those whose benefits they received. But why should their gratitude remain sterile and ineffective till then? Is it not true that the Holy Souls are no less dear and pleasing to God in Purgatory than they will be later in heaven? Would not their prayer in many instances be too late, especially as regards graces to be obtained for their benefactors while these latter are yet on earth? And would not the motive to pray for the Suffering Souls be greatly weakened—the motive arising from their gratitude towards their benefactors —if these Souls could pray effectually for their liberators only after they are released from Purgatory?

Hence the practice of invoking the Holy Souls is well sustained and authorized. First, confidence in the gratitude of these Sufferers is revived, and with it our zeal to help them. Secondly, this practice leads us to consider them not only as Suffering, but also as Holy Souls, whose sufferings are not merely punishments, but also immolations; these souls are consumed by flames of holy love even more than they are by the flames surrounding them. Thereby our compassion for them receives increased sacredness, and makes us sharers in their pure and perfect penitential spirit, a spirit so strong and fervent that it cannot be equaled anywhere on earth."

424. True, for the Church suffering there is no longer any time for action, but only for suffering; no longer any time for gaining merit, but only for bowing submissively to the will of God and paying indebtedness to His Divine Justice "to the last farthing." But this places no obstacle to our intercession for the Souls in Purgatory.

The sinner is separated from Jesus Christ, the source of supernatural life; he is a dead member of His body. Hence he cannot gain merit for heaven. "And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." (I Cor. XIII. 8.) The sinner therefore has no merit of his works, however good they may be in themselves, even if he should give all his possessions to the poor, or suffer martyrdom. But though gaining no merit for heaven by his good works, the sinner may obtain through them the grace of conversion. God does not owe him this grace. If He imparts it to him, it is

granted not as a merit, but as an effect of divine mercy in reward for the good disposition shown by the good works he performed in co-operation with active grace. How effective good works are for conversion is demonstrated by Cornelius the centurion, "a just man and one that feareth God" (Acts x. 22), whom God led to the true faith on account of his good works. It is proved by the conversion of the Ninivites: "And God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil way: and God had mercy with regard to the evil which He had said that He would do them, and He did it not." (Jon. II. 10.) And of Manasses we also read: "He did evil before the Lord.....And after that he was in distress, he prayed to the Lord, his God, and did penance exceedingly before the God of his fathers. And he entreated Him and besought Him earnestly: and He heard his prayer and brought him again into Jerusalem into his kingdom, and Manasses knew that the Lord was God." (II Paralip. XXXIII.)

425. Though Manasses was a sinner, God heard his prayer: can we imagine that His living Heart will refuse to hear the prayers of the Holy Souls, who forget their own sufferings to be mindful of the sufferings of others? Even though these Souls cannot effectively pray for themselves, will God reject their prayers when they pray to preserve their brethren from the flames of hell, and if it so please Him, also from the purifying flames in which they themselves are confined? Can we imagine that God hears the supplications of sinners, but refuses to hear those of His beloved spouses? God undoubtedly hears them and grants their petitions —not because He is bound to do so by His promise, or because their prayers are meri-

torious; but simply because He loves these Souls. The Suffering Souls, then, can present our needs to God by way of intercession; and God in His mercy and love deigns to hear them, though He does not always grant their petitions. On earth we can rely on God's promise that He will grant our prayers; the saints in heaven can rely for the hearing of their prayers on God's complacency and on their merits; the Suffering Souls must rely on God's love for them.

426. Concerning the prayer of the Suffering Souls for the living, St. Augustine in his treatise on the care for the dead writes as follows: Holy Scripture testifies that sometimes the dead are sent to the living, while on the other hand St. Paul was transported from among the living into paradise. When Saul beheld the camp of the Philistines, he was much afraid and sought consolation with the Lord. "And he consulted the Lord, and the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by spirits, nor by prophets." (I Kings XVIII. 6.) And he went to the woman of Endor, who called up for him the spirit of Samuel. "And Samuel said to Saul: Why hast thou disturbed my rest, that I should be brought up? And Saul said: I am in great distress: for the Philistines fight against me, and God is departed from me, and would not hear me, neither by the hand of prophets, nor by dreams; therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest show me what I shall do. And Samuel said: Why askest thou me, seeing the Lord has departed from thee, and is gone over to thy rival? For the Lord will do to thee as He spoke by me, and He will rend thy kingdom out of thy hand, and will give it to thy neighbor David: because thou didst not

obey the voice of the Lord, neither didst thou execute the wrath of His indignation upon Amalec; therefore hath the Lord done to thee what thou sufferest this day. And the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hands of the Philistines: and to-morrow thou and thy son shall be with me, and the Lord will also deliver the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines." (I Kings XVIII. 15—19.) Thus Samuel proved Saul's protector as in life so also after death, even enabling him to prepare for death by announcing it to him for the very next day.

427. Judas the Machabee also, renowned for his solicitude for the dead, was visited by apparitions from the other world. "Nicanor being puffed up with exceeding great pride, sought to set up a public monument of the victory over Judas. But Machabeus ever trusted with all hope that God would help them; and he exhorted his people not to fear the coming of the Gentiles, but to remember the help they had before received from heaven, and now to hope for victory from the Almighty. And speaking to them out of the law and the prophets, and withal putting them in mind of the battles they had fought before, he made them more cheerful. Then after he had encouraged them, he showed withal the falsehood of the Gentiles, and their breach of oaths. So he armed every one of them, not with defence of shield and spear, but with very good speeches and exhortations, and told them a dream worthy to be believed, whereby he rejoiced them all. Now the vision was in this manner: Onias, who had been highpriest, a good and virtuous man, modest in his looks, gentle in his manners, and graceful in his speech, and exercised from a child in all virtues, hold-

ing up his hands, prayed for all the people of the Jews. After this there appeared also another man, admirable for age and glory, and environed with great beauty and majesty. Then Onias, answering, said: This is a lover of his brethren, and of the people of Israel. This is he that prayeth much for the people, and for all the holy city, Jeremias, the prophet of God. Whereupon Jeremias stretched forth his right hand, and gave to Judas a sword of gold, saying: Take this holy sword a gift from God, wherewith thou shalt overthrow the adversaries of my people Israel." (II Machab. xv. 6—16.) This apparition of two just souls to Judas Machabeus and his victory over the enemy are regarded by some interpreters of Scripture as being the reward he received for the twelve thousand drachms of silver he had sent to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered in atonement for the sins of those who had fallen in battle.

428. Even the reprobate are concerned for the salvation of their relatives. When Dives was refused the cooling drops of water which he craved in his torments, he besought Abraham to send Lazarus to his father's house: "For I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torments." (Luke xvi. 28.) And Abraham listened to his prayer, explaining to him that they had Moses and the prophets, whom if they did not hear, neither would they believe even if one should rise again from the dead; which argumentation seems to imply that if they had not had Moses and the prophets, he might have sent Lazarus to them. Now, if Onias and Jeremias, who as yet did not see God from face to face, could pray to Him and had their

petitions granted; if even reprobate sinners, for whom the time of merit was past, could implore the mercy of heaven—why, then, should the souls in Purgatory be denied the privilege of praying for the living? Richard of Mediavilla proves the probable truth of this doctrine as follows: "Prayer is a work of charity. If the souls in Purgatory prayed for us during their mortal life, when not yet confirmed in grace, they will do it so much the more, now that they are confirmed in grace. True, their prayers, like our own, may not always be heard, because the Holy Souls do not so clearly discern the counsels of God as do the saints in heaven. Nevertheless their prayers benefit many, yea, all of us, provided no obstacle be placed on our part. It follows therefore that the souls in Purgatory effectually pray for us, notwithstanding the fact that their time of merit by works is past."

429. Concerning the comparisons made between persons in their death agony and the Holy Souls in their agony of suffering, they are in all respects inadequate and therefore inadmissible. The reason is this: The souls in Purgatory suffer indescribable torments, yet they suffer so patiently and with such resignation to the will of God, that they experience neither worry nor terror. Being assured of their final salvation, their pains are no obstacle to their love of God or their charity for man. Though in a state of terrible punishment, they are nevertheless convinced that He who punishes them regards both them and us with paternal complacency. Therefore they are resigned in their own sufferings and they remember our needs in their prayer. If like our Lord Himself many of these souls were able even in this world to preserve perfect equa-

nimity and peace of heart amid the many tribulations, persecutions and sorrows that they had to bear, they will not lose their composure in the torments of Purgatory, where despite their terrible suffering they have the consoling assurance of being confirmed in the grace of God. Even in this life devout souls follow the example of our Lord, who prayed for the salvation of the world amid the tortures of His crucifixion—they remember their friends and enemies in their prayers: why should they not be permitted to do so in the next world?

430. The condition of souls separated from the body cannot be compared with the condition of souls united with the body. If the body experiences pain, the spirit also is affected thereby. Hence Aristotle remarks, that the heart of a sick man is continually disconsolate and in pain. In illness we are scarcely able to formulate a good thought or an act of resignation to the will of God, as Holy Scripture testifies: "For the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind." (Wisd. IX. 15.)

431. In proof of what we have just said let us adduce the sayings of some of the holy martyrs. St. Stephen exclaims, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God... Lord Jesus, receive my spirit... Lord Jesus, lay not this sin to their charge." (Acts VII.) St. Tiburtius protests, "I ardently desire to shed my blood for Him who for love of me died on the cross. I do not fear the glowing coals; for me they will have the coolness of dew and the fragrance of roses and carnations." St. Lawrence addresses his tormentor,

"Thou hater of the Christian name, thinkest thou to terrify me by these torments? Know that if these be torments, they are so for thee, not for me; for I rejoice in having to endure them. For a long time I have desired nothing more ardently than to be seated at this banquet and to partake of this delicious repast. For me the flames are a refreshment; they retain their heat to scorch thee for all eternity without consuming thee. Behold, my flesh is sufficiently done on one side; turn it over and feast on it."—Hundreds of other examples might be cited in proof of the fact that divine grace can gain the mastery over bodily pain.

432. If then the martyrs rejoiced during the most cruel torments, we have so much the more reason to conclude that the souls in Purgatory, freed from the bondage of the body and enjoying the full liberty of the spirit, may suffer great torments and nevertheless enjoy peace of mind. While suffering intensely, they may yet experience great supernal consolations; they may receive favors from God by their prayers and they may be in a condition to make magnanimous and heroic acts of love for God and man. To comprehend still better this peace of soul in the midst of the most excruciating torments, we must contemplate the sacred humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. In His passion, at the height of His agony, when dying on the cross and exclaiming, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" the soul of Jesus was in perfect peace; for crying with a loud voice, He said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." (Luke XXIII. 46.) And according to the testimony of the Evangelists He prayed for His enemies even on the cross. In like manner the Holy Souls suffer the most excruciating

torments, while at the same time they are filled with heavenly consolations; the flame of the love of God and man burns more strongly within them than does the flame of the fire that surrounds them; and this love it is that urges them to become our advocates with God.

433. St. Thomas also maintains that the souls in Purgatory are not aware of our thoughts, desires and prayers, because as yet they do not enjoy the beatific vision of God; hence we can not effectually address our prayers to them.—True, the Church does not address official prayers to the Suffering Souls for the very reason adduced by the Angelic Doctor. Besides it would be against the general rule of divine order, if God were to grant special revelations to the Suffering Souls during their term of punishment. Granted moreover that they cannot, without God's special permission, have a full and clear knowledge of all particular circumstances and occurrences of our lives, at all events they know as much of us as we do of them. *We* know that they are in a state of suffering, that they are in need of our help, and that we can help them. This is sufficient to induce us to pray for them. *They* know of us, by their own experience, that we on earth are exposed to many trials, combats, temptations and dangers; they know—better than we—the efficacy and necessity of divine grace: hence they feel impelled to pray for all wayfarers on earth, especially for their relations and benefactors. The learned Suarez doubts not that the Suffering Souls pray for us effectively, because they are in the friendship and love of God, and united with us in holy charity. They remember us, he says; they know our needs at least in a general

way, and are probably informed of our special wants by the angels or by various other means. He even goes further and adds, that they are continually informed concerning us by such souls as come to them from this world, and according to St. Augustine by special revelations of God. At all events, whenever God permits them to experience our aid, He can also reveal to them from whom they have received it, and what return their benefactors expect.

434. The following lucid explanation why the Church does not address the Holy Souls officially in prayer is given by the learned Scheeben: "The Church, at least in her official prayers, views the saints of heaven as being the persons who are specially and properly called and empowered by God to be the true mediators for mankind on earth. Enjoying the beatific vision of God and participating in His heavenly glory, they are themselves not in need of intercession. The Church therefore practices invocation of the saints reigning with Christ as an act of veneration due to them. The souls in Purgatory on the other hand are themselves still in need of the intercession of others, the same as are the faithful living on earth; and hence their intercession can naturally be implored only in the manner in which we implore the intercession of holy persons during their earthly life. The invocation of the Poor Souls is therefore a private act of the faithful; and the Church has no occasion, and in fact no commission, to approve or authorize this act or practice of her children by officially addressing her own prayers to the Holy Souls. To draw an adverse conclusion from this act of the Church would be permissible only in case that she reproved or prohibited this

invocation when publicly practiced. As a matter of fact however, this practice is tolerated not only in Bavaria, but also in Italy, under the very eyes of the Supreme Pontiff."

435. The Holy Souls are not invoked by the Church in her official prayers, they are not recognized officially by her as intercessors, because public invocation, as officially addressed to the saints by the Church, is at the same time an act of veneration—an honor reserved soley for those who are in the state of glory, and not accorded to saints on earth nor to the souls in Purgatory. True, here on earth we may privately ask saintly servants of God, and even our relatives and friends, for their prayer; and we do so often, saying, "Pray for me," or, "Let us remember one another in prayer." This is not, nor can it be, offensive to anyone. But the Church cannot officially accord this honor to any mortal, since it is reserved by God to the sharers of His eternal bliss. Hence she does not officially invoke the intercession of living servants of God, nor of any living person whatsoever. Thus also the invocation of the Holy Souls must be left to private devotion; and the confidence in the power of their intercession will increase in the hearts of the faithful in the same measure as they multiply their suffrages for them.

436. This private invocation of the Holy Souls is not only permitted in the same way in which we invoke the prayers of saintly persons, good friends, or the poor to whom we give alms asking their prayers in return; it is moreover very commendable to invoke them with particular confidence, because the Holy Souls being most grateful will show their gratitude by

their intercession, which easily finds favor with God on account of their sanctity. God will then grant our requests not simply in reward for our charity, but also to prove thereby that the intercession of the Holy Souls is very efficacious. When Onias and Jeremias prayed for Israel, were they not heard? St. Thomas teaches that the Holy Souls, with God's permission, can leave their place of confinement and appear visibly in this world, both for the purpose of exhorting and warning the faithful, as also to obtain help for themselves. He adds that God also employs them sometimes as His messengers instead of the angels. St. Gregory relates that God wrought miracles through St. Paschasius even while the saint was still detained in Purgatory. The same is related by St. Peter Damian of St. Engelhart, archbishop of Cologne.

Hence we conclude with Suarez and many other learned and holy theologians, that the devotion to the Holy Souls and the invocation of their intercession are both lawful and profitable.

§ 58. The Gratitude of the Suffering Souls Towards Their Benefactors is Manifested Interiorly and Exteriorly.

437. The gratitude of the souls in Purgatory towards their benefactors is marvellous indeed. True gratitude manifests itself both interiorly and exteriorly—interiorly, by evoking sentiments of grateful and lasting acknowledgment; exteriorly by giving expression to these sentiments in words, and by returning the favors received from others whenever there is

an opportunity of doing so. The souls in Purgatory show their gratitude to us in all these ways. Above all they acknowledge the reception of benefits. In Holy Scripture we find the following examples of gratitude: Pharaoh was grateful to Joseph, Raguel to Moses, the Israelites to Rahab, David to Abiathar, Elias to the widow of Sarepta, Saul to the Cinites, Naaman to Elias the prophet, Tobias, father and son, to the archangel Raphael, the inhabitants of Jabes to Saul, Assuerus to Mardocheus, Nabuchodonosor and Darius to Daniel, St. Paul to Phoebe, etc. It has already been demonstrated that the souls in Purgatory can show themselves grateful towards their benefactors. Why should they not do so?

438. During the late Franco Prussian war several wounded and captive Germans, officers and privates, were quartered in the chateau of a noble French lady. She, an aged widow, not only ordered her servants to look after the welfare of her guests, but also convinced herself by her own personal observation that they were well cared for. She ministered most kindly to the wants of all. Such as understood French she encouraged with comforting words, while on those who could not understand the language she bestowed special acts of kindness. Many a grateful prayer ascended to heaven for this humane lady. A young officer, whose wounds she bandaged personally, was deeply touched by her devotedness; and accordingly he one day addressed to her the question, "My dear madam, why are you so anxious for the welfare of the enemies of your country?" Sorrowfully she replied, "My son is an officer in the French army. He was wounded and made a prisoner. A German mother took

pity on him, received him into her house, and nursed him. He recovered, and it is to this good woman that I owe his preservation. I now imitate her example from gratitude to her and to our good God."

439. Tears glistened in the good lady's eyes. The officer was silent; his thoughts wandered to his far-away home, to his own dear mother, of whom this kind French lady reminded him so much. The lady had written several letters to her son's benefactress, but had as yet received no answer. While she was still standing at the couch of the wounded officer, a servant entered and handed her a letter. Glancing hastily at the address, she opened the envelope; and soon she exclaimed, "Thanks be to God! My benefactress, the benefactress of my son, has at last sent me her photograph." She showed the picture to the officer. Scarcely had he glanced at it, when he exclaimed, "My mother's picture!" "Your mother's?" tremblingly asked the lady; and on being assured that she had not misunderstood the officer's words, she fell on her knees and gave vent to her feelings in the following prayer: "O God, Thou hast entrusted to me the son of my benefactress. How I thank Thee from my inmost soul!" If the feeling of gratitude is so deeply rooted in the human heart here on earth, how strong must it be with a soul in the other world, a soul unalterably confirmed in the love of God?

440. Can there be even the smallest doubt that the Suffering Souls, these spouses of Christ, are inwardly grateful for benefits received? The souls in Purgatory become aware that their punishment has been mitigated and shortened; and immediately they ask themselves the question: "Who may the charit-

able person be to whom I am indebted for so great a favor?" And the greater and more intense the torments which the souls had to endure, the greater and stronger will be their inner sentiment of gratitude. It is probable, as was already observed, that the souls are informed by special divine revelation or through their guardian angels who the persons are that come to their relief. Their gratitude towards these persons will last throughout all eternity; for such is the will of their Divine Spouse, expressed in Holy Writ, "Forget not the kindness of thy surety; for he hath given his life for thee." (Eccli. XXIX. 20.) And St. Paul says, "But above all things have charity, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body: and be ye thankful." (Coloss. III. 14, 15.) "In all things give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you all." (I Thessal. v. 18.)

441. The sentiment of gratitude felt interiorly soon finds expression in words. If this is the case even in this life—if grateful men become eloquent when thanking their benefactors; how much the more so may we expect the same of the Holy Souls in Purgatory! This was experienced by Father Conrad, a zealous servant of God in the seraphic Order of Friars Minor. One night, while praying for the soul of a lately deceased brother, and having said only one "Our Father" with the versicle, "Eternal rest," etc., the brother appeared to him; and having reverently thanked him, he added, "O Father, if you could but know how greatly I was relieved in my torments by this short prayer, you would instantly repeat it. For the sake of God's mercy, continue in prayer!" The

good priest continued his prayer, persevering in it till he saw the brother's soul gloriously ascend to heaven. St. Bristan, a holy bishop, was accustomed to pass the night in the cemetery. When closing his prayer with the words, "May they rest in peace!" he would often hear from the graves the response, "Amen! Amen!" Father Julius Mancinelli, of the Society of Jesus, had an almost continual intercourse with the souls in Purgatory. They visited him, thanked him, and assured him that he had lessened their pain by his prayer. Blessed Frances, a Carmelite nun, was also frequently visited by souls from Purgatory. They followed her wherever she went, some thanking her, others recommending themselves to her prayer. If she said the rosary, they would devoutly touch and kiss the beads.

442. Anna Mary Taigi, a holy woman of Rome, was also privileged often to see released souls, who came to thank her. One day she intended to receive holy communion in the basilica of St. John Lateran, and to offer it for a certain deceased person. During the first Mass at which she assisted, and which was celebrated by her confessor, she was suddenly attacked with a great depression of spirit joined with severe bodily pains. Nevertheless she continued in prayer and offered up her illness in atonement to divine justice. Then Cardinal Pedicini began his Mass. At the *Gloria* the saintly woman was suddenly seized with great supernatural joy and consolation. Then a soul just released from Purgatory appeared to her and said, "I thank thee, my sister, for thy compassion. I will remember thee at the throne of God; for thanks to thy prayer I now go to enter heaven, where I shall be in bliss forever."

443. Omitting a great number of other instances that might be cited in confirmation of the fact that the departed souls may personally express their gratitude for the least help by which we assist them, we append one related by Pere Lacordaire in his "Conferences on the Immortality of the Soul." The Polish prince X., an infidel, had just finished and was about to publish a book combating the immortality of the soul. One day, as he was walking in his park, a woman fell at his feet weeping. She addressed him sorrowfully, "Illustrious prince, my husband died a short time ago. Probably his soul is now in Purgatory, suffering greatly. I am so poor that I cannot even afford the customary alms to have a Mass celebrated for the repose of his soul. Please help me to come to the aid of my husband." Despite his own disbelief in the future existence, he was moved by her appeal and gave her a gold coin which he happened to have with him. The happy woman hastened to church and had a Mass said for her husband. Three days after, towards evening, the prince retired to his library, and there began to occupy himself with reading and correcting his book. Hearing a noise he looked around, and he saw before him a man dressed in the peasant's garb of the village. Astonished and angry at the disturbance, the prince arose and was about to address the intruder, when lo, he disappeared. The prince now called his servants and asked, "Why do you permit people to enter here without my leave?" "What people?" they asked in reply. "That man, that peasant, who just left this room." "Please be assured, sir, that no one has been admitted here," they all replied. "There was no stranger here, not even in the palace." The

prince silently dismissed them, but was convinced that somebody had been in the room. Next day he had forgotten the incident, when the stranger again appeared in the same place and at the same hour, not saying a word. This time the prince's anger knew no bounds; and rising to chastise the intruder, he saw him again vanishing before his eyes. He aroused the whole house to capture the man, but he was nowhere to be found. Nobody could explain the strange occurrence. The prince now anxiously awaited the next evening, resolved to have an explanation from his strange visitor. And he came. But before the prince could utter a word, the unknown man addressed him as follows: "Prince, I come to thank you. I am the husband of that poor woman to whom you gave an alms a few days ago to enable her to have a Mass said for the repose of my soul. This your charity pleased God, and He permitted me to come and thank you, and to assure you that there is a next life, that the soul is immortal. It must be your task to make good use of this favor for your own eternal welfare." After these words the Polish peasant disappeared. The prince's book against the immortality of the soul was not published.

444. The Holy Souls are not content to express their gratitude in words; they return the benefits conferred on them by manifold services rendered to their benefactors. It was already explained that the Holy Souls can pray for us, and that while they are unable to do anything for themselves, they can exert themselves in their fiery prison in favor of others. They continually practice various exercises of virtue; but they cannot thereby obtain for themselves a

hastening or increase of their glory, or a lessening of their punishment. They are in a state of suffering until the payment of "the last farthing" is made; for they can no longer atone. Hence they are dependent on the atonement made for them by their brethren on earth. The more strictly divine justice insists on due satisfaction, the more liberally divine mercy grants the favors which the Suffering Souls implore for their benefactors. Thus God encourages us in our charity for them, and consoles them by granting their petitions. The possibilty of the intercessory power of the Holy Souls being beyond doubt, their exercise of this power must not be questioned.

445. St. Bridget heard the souls in Purgatory call to heaven, saying in a loud voice, "O merciful God, reward a hundred-fold the charity of them that by their good works assist us to come from out of this darkness to the eternal light and to attain to Thy beatific vision." If the Holy Souls pray thus to God, whose beloved children they are: will He not hear them? And should we therefore not be inspired with great confidence in their help? Their aid will be for us a continual source of favors; for their prayer possesses all the qualities that render it efficient and pleasing to God: a living faith, great frequency, ardent charity, the purest of intentions. Unlike ourselves, they have not to repel the thousand distractions of a troubled imagination; their love for us is not impaired by selfish, interested motives. Even their tears, their torments and their loving resignation to the will of God are prayers—sweet incense in golden censers borne by the angels to the throne of the Lamb, there to find a gracious acceptance.

446. St. Catherine of Bologna testifies that whenever she asked a favor of God she always had recourse to the Holy Souls, and that she almost always obtained what she asked for. And she adds, that many favors which she did not obtain through the saints of heaven were granted to her through the intercession of the Suffering Souls. The Venerable Frances of the Blessed Sacrament assures us that the Holy Souls assisted her in all dangers, and disclosed to her the snares of the devil. A soul appearing to her said, "However much the evil spirits may persecute you —fear not; we will always defend you." Another soul assured her, "We pray daily for you; and as often as anyone remembers us, we also remember him and intercede for him with God. Especially do we implore for him the grace to serve God well and to die a happy death." The same was declared by a holy soul appearing in 1870. The contemplation of the faults for which the Holy Souls are suffering induced the Venerable Lindmayer to avoid these same faults herself. The Holy Souls reminded her of her spiritual exercises and warned her when she was in danger of committing a fault. Hence she remarks, "By devotion to the Holy Souls our progress in virtue and perfection is greatly hastened." The Venerable Crescentia was accustomed to invoke the aid of the Holy Souls whenever she wished to obtain special favors from God; and she assures us that as a rule she was heard immediately.

447. The same is true to-day of thousands of devout Christians who present their petitions to God through the Holy Souls: as a rule they are successful in obtaining what they desire. If the Holy Souls can

and do achieve such results while still in torment, it follows that they can and do obtain still more for us after their entrance into heaven. There is every reason to believe that the very first favors they ask of God's mercy are for those to whom they owe their more speedy entrance into glory; and that they will continue their intercession as long as they see their benefactors in spiritual or temporal danger. St. Gregory says that there are thousands of instances from which may be learned how efficiently the Holy Souls can help in distress, illness, danger of war and death, etc., even while they are yet in torments. They obtain for us health in sickness, aid in poverty, relief in distress, counsel in doubt, and protection in danger; they assist us in temporal affairs and in the affairs of our salvation, coming to our aid especially at the hour of death and before the tribunal of judgment. Even after death their benefactors experience their gratitude, for they implore for them a speedy release from Purgatory. All this will be made apparent by the following theses and examples.

§ 59. The Suffering Souls Aid Their Benefactors in Temporal Affairs.

448. There are many examples from which we can learn to what extent the saints on earth exercised charity towards suffering humanity. St. Mary Magdalen was wont to say that she was happier serving her fellowmen than she could be by engaging in contemplation; and she gave the following reason: "If I am engaged in contemplation, God aids me; but when I aid my neighbor, I serve God. Our Divine

Savior Himself declares that we do unto Him all that we do for our neighbor." Even the common sentiment of humanity demands that we aid one another. Henry IV. and a number of his courtiers one day engaged in hunting in the woods. A young nobleman of his train found a poor old man, who had gathered faggots and had fallen beneath the weight of his burden. Scarcely had the young man noticed this when he sprang from his horse, went to the poor man and raised him up. Noticing that he was hurt by the fall and bled profusely, he not only gave him all the money he had about him, but also ordered his servant to place him on his horse and to conduct him to a physician. Then he rejoined the king's train. One of the courtiers reprimanded the young man for his behavior, and asked him if he was not ashamed at having left the king for a beggar. "Why should I be ashamed?" rejoined the truly noble young man. "Should I uncharitably omit a humane action which does not interfere with the service I owe to the king? You should rather be ashamed for not being willing to do the same." The good king, who had secretly and from a distance observed the whole affair, and had also heard the young man's reply, was so well pleased that he thenceforth placed the greatest confidence in the young nobleman.

449. If a human ruler thus highly esteems a charitable action done by one of his subjects to another, what a reward may he not expect who performs charitable acts for the sake of Him who said, "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to Me!" (Math. xxvi. 40.) God often rewards such charitable acts even here on earth.

St. Elizabeth one day came down from the Wartburg castle bearing in her apron food for the poor, when suddenly her husband stood before her. "Let me see what you have there!" he said, drawing back her cloak. And to his astonishment he beheld the most beautiful white and red roses. To reassure his beloved wife he was about to address some words of encouragement to her, when behold, there appeared above her a shining crucifix. And greatly wondering, he took one of the miraculous roses, which he reverently preserved. In her childhood this charitable saint played at jumping-rope in the church-yard; and as often as she jumped she said, "May they rest in peace!" meaning the souls of those interred there. And her playmates had to repeat the same ejaculation.—St. Zitta, a holy servant-girl, was one day accosted by a beggar. As she had nothing else to give, she went to the well and filled a pitcher with cool, sparkling water, which she presented to the beggar to refresh him. And he found the water turned into generous wine.—At Amiens in France St. Martin met a beggar shivering in the cold from want of clothing. Taking his sword he cut in two the soldier's cloak he wore, and gave one-half to the beggar. His soldier comrades laughed at him; but during the following night our Lord appeared to him wearing that very half of his cloak; and addressing the angels that surrounded Him, He said, "Martin, still a catechumen, covered Me with this cloak."—St. John of God one day found a poor boy shivering with cold and walking barefoot in the street. He took him up into his arms to bring him to an asylum. At first his burden was very light, but its weight continued to increase, so that he finally

fell to the ground. And the boy appeared to him as Christ, our Lord, who said to him showing him a pomegranate surmounted by a cross, "John, thou wilt find thy cross at Granada." And Jesus disappeared, leaving in the charitable man's heart that ardent desire of serving Him in His poor, by which he attained to such great sanctity.—St. Paulinus sold himself into slavery to ransom a poor widow's son. God was so well pleased with this heroic act of charity, that he inspired the Vandal king to set the holy bishop free, together with all the slaves belonging to his diocese, and he moreover presented him with several ship-loads of provisions.—St. Elizabeth, mentioned before, was moved by compassion for a poor leper to cleanse his wounds; then she anointed them with oil, and put the sufferer into her own bed. Her husband, the landgrave, when informed thereof, thought it an excess of charity, and went to see the man. On removing the coverlet, behold, before his eyes appeared the Crucified. And turning to his holy spouse he said, "Elizabeth, dear sister, such guests are ever welcome to my bed. Let no one prevent thy charitable practices."

450. If charity causes Omnipotence to perform such miracles even in this world; if we poor sinners can help one another by our prayers here below; is it probable that God will show less favor when the Suffering Souls desire to come to our aid, when they implore His mercy for us? The thought is repugnant to a religious mind, and God Himself signifies that the idea is proved untenable; for He graciously hears and grants in our favor the petition of the Holy Souls.—Gregory Carfora, a canon regular, writes, "At Naples a poor man, the sole support of his family, was im-

prisoned for debt. His wife was in great distress not only because now the burden of providing for the family rested on her, but also because she was expected to cancel her husband's debt. In this strait she had recourse to a rich man, who was noted for his charity towards the poor. She presented a well-written petition, but received only a small coin. Still more depressed by this repulse she went to the next church to pour out her heart before God, the true Father of the poor. While praying fervently before the altar a thought suddenly occurred to her mind, suggested perhaps by her guardian angel: she remembered the powerful help rendered by the Holy Souls to those who invoke their aid. Filled with great confidence she took the little money she had, and gave it to have a Mass said for them. On leaving the church she was met by a venerable old man, who addressed her most pleasantly and inquired for the cause of her sadness. Having told him her misfortunes, he gave her a letter which she was to deliver to a certain nobleman in the city; and then he left her. She immediately set out to fulfil the errand. The gentleman to whom the letter was addressed was greatly astonished, when on receiving it he recognized the handwriting of his deceased father; and accordingly he asked her who had given her the letter. She answered that an old venerable looking gentleman had given it to her. Glancing around the room her eyes rested on a portrait; and in great surprise she added that he looked exactly like the figure on that picture, only more cheerful. With trembling hand the man now opened the letter, which contained the following words, "My son: At this very moment thy father is leaving Purgatory to go to

heaven, released by means of a Mass which this poor woman caused to be celebrated. Therefore I commend her to thee. Be grateful, and reward her well; for she is greatly in need." The gentleman repeatedly read these words, tears meanwile streaming from his eyes; and the oftener he read them, the more they consoled him. "Oh, my poor friend!" he exclaimed, "with your little alms you conferred so great a favor on my father. I will reward your charity most bountifully; henceforth neither you nor yours shall suffer from want."

451. By the command of Pope Gregory VIII. Christopher Sandoval, archbishop of Sevilla, proclaimed to the world what had occurred to him while a student at the university of Louvain. From early youth he had been accustomed to give all the money he could save in alms for the Suffering Souls. Once, when his usual allowance failed to arrive from Spain, he was in such distress that he even suffered for want of food. But what grieved him most was that he could no longer give alms. Not being able to help the Poor Souls in any other way, he one day denied himself his customary meal; he went to church hungry, there at least to pray for the Suffering Souls. He had scarcely knelt, when he saw at his side a beautiful youth in traveler's costume, who courteously invited him to dine with him and to receive news from Spain. Christopher accompanied him, somewhat awed by the unusual demeanor of the stranger. At the end of their meal the visitor gave him a purse filled with gold, telling him to use it to defray his expenses. As to himself, he would apply to the student's father for the refunding of the money. And with this he took

his leave. Christopher searched everywhere for the mysterious stranger; but neither in Louvain, nor later in Spain, did he ever hear of him. His father also never was asked to make good the loan. Hence the young man took it for granted that a soul from Purgatory had come to his aid in gratitude for his charity. He was still more confirmed in this view because the sum of money he had received lasted just till his usual allowance arrived, which had been delayed by an accident.

452. Sister Macrina Mieczystawska, Superioress of a convent at Minck, a victim of the persecution under Czar Nicholas, came to Rome and had an audience with Pope Pius IX. He desired her to publish a description of the sufferings endured by her and her Sisters during a period of seven years. She relates as follows: "In 1843 the apostate Simearsko had us cast into prison and restricted us for six days to a fare of salt herrings. Daily every Sister received half a herring, without bread and water, thus to force us by thirst to abjure our faith. During the first two days we were tortured fearfully by thirst, so that the skin was parched from our lips and palates. In this torment we contemplated the thirst of the Suffering Souls in Purgatory, and encouraged one another, saying, 'If our thirst is so painful, when it might be relieved by a glass of water, how great must the thirst be that consumes the Suffering Souls! They are surrounded by fire; and yet they do not yearn for earthly water, but for the fountain of living waters, God Himself, by whom alone their thirst can be quenched.' And we prostrated ourselves on the ground to pray for the Suffering Souls. God had

mercy on us: thenceforth we suffered neither from hunger nor from thirst. When on the seventh day our prison was opened and we were driven to our usual hard labor, the guards imagined we would hasten to the well; but we voluntarily obtained from drink also on the seventh day in honor of the seven dolors of our Sorrowful Mother Mary. During those six days Wierowkin and two Russian popes often visited us, threatening us with new tortures if we did not apostatize. When the former saw us well and in good spirits, he angrily exclaimed, 'Forsooth, it seems I cannot kill them; they do not eat, and yet they are healthy and strong. It seems every one of them is possessed by a devil that suffers for her'."

453. A poor servant girl, who had been well instructed in her religion in youth, had the pious custom of having a Mass said every month for the faithful departed. Even after she removed to the city with her employers, she never omitted it once. Moreover she had made it her duty to attend the Mass herself, and to unite her prayer with that of the priest, particularly for that soul whose purification was nearest to completion. This was her usual prayer. God tried this poor servant girl by a tedious illness, during which she not only had to suffer great pain, but also lost her place and had to expend her last savings. On her recovery, when she was able to go out for the first time, only one franc, (equivalent to nearly twenty-five cents,) was left to her. After sending a devout appeal to heaven she looked about for a new position. She had heard of an employment office at the other end of the town, and on her way there she entered the church of St. Eustace. Seeing the priest at the altar it occurred to

her that she had not ordered her usual Mass that month; and moreover, that this was the very day on which it had been her custom to have the Mass said. What was she to do? If she parted with her last franc, she had not even wherewith to appease her hunger. She struggled between piety and human prudence, but the former triumphed. "At all events, God knows that I do it for His glory; and He will not abandon me." She resolutely entered the sacristy, made known her request, and then devoutly assisted at the Holy Sacrifice. Afterwards she proceeded on her way, not without apprehensions concerning her future. What will become of her, entirely destitute as she is, if she finds no position? While she went her way troubled with these thoughts, a pale young man of noble bearing addressed her, "You are looking for a place, are you not?"—"Yes, sir!"—"Well, go to .....street, number....., and ask for Madam..... I think she will engage you, and you will have a good home with her." He disappeared among the crowd without taking notice of the girl's expressions of gratitude. She inquired for the street, found the number, and rang the door-bell. While she was waiting, a servant girl left the house with wrathful mutterings of discontent. Of her she inquired, "Is the lady of the house at home?"—"Yes," was the reply. "She may answer the bell herself; I am done with her." And angrily she descended the steps and left. Immediately after a mild and noble-looking lady opened the door, and in a soft voice inquired about her wishes. The girl replied, "Madam, I was told this morning that you were in need of a chamber-maid, and I have come to ask you for the place. I was as-

sured that you would treat me kindly." In great astonishment the lady answered, "My dear child, this is indeed a great surprise. It is scarcely half an hour since I dismissed the rude servant you met at the door; and I thought, with the exception of us two, nobody could know anything about the affair. Who can have sent you?" The girl replied, "It was a young man, Madam. He met me on the street after I had left the church. And I thank God with all my heart for this providential meeting, for I must find a place to-day since I have not a cent left." The lady was greatly perplexed, and could find no explanation for the extraordinary occurrence. Meanwhile the girl glanced around the room, and her eyes rested on a portrait hanging against the wall. "Oh, Madam!" she now joyfully exclaimed, "see, there is the picture of the young man that sent me to you." At these words the lady showed great emotion and almost fainted. After recovering her composure, she bade the girl to tell her the whole story. Thus she became acquainted with the poor servant's devotion to the Holy Souls, heard of the Mass she had caused to be celebrated for them that morning, and received a detailed account of her meeting with the young man. When the simple recital was finished, the good lady embraced the girl and said, "Dear child, you shall not be my servant, but my daughter. It was my son who sent you to me. He died two years ago; and to you he owes his release from Purgatory. I do not doubt it in the least; and I am certain God permitted him to send you to me. I bid you welcome. Let us henceforth jointly pray for all souls still suffering in Purgatory, that they may be admitted to eternal bliss."

454. In the life of Eusebius, Duke of Sardinia, who lived in the thirteenth century, we read the following extraordinary occurrence. Not content with praying for the Suffering Souls, he had devoted the tenth part of his income to suffrages for their release. Compelled to engage in war with Ostorgius, king of Sicily, he was so hard pressed by the army of his foe, that he was about to leave the city. That very morning he saw a mighty army come to his assistance—an army numbering apparently about forty thousand warriors, horse and foot, all clad in white uniforms. Ostorgius, too, saw them and was seized with such consternation, that he sued for peace. Eusebius thanked God and his strange allies for the help he had received, when the leader of the unknown army addressed him as follows: "Know, Eusebius, that the soldiers you see here are souls who were, nearly all of them, released by you from Purgatory. The Lord of hosts has sent us to your aid. Continue in your devotion to the Holy Souls. The more souls you release from Purgatory, the more protectors you will have in heaven, where they will continually implore God for your welfare."—Father Louis Monaco, a canon regular, had a similar experience.—Once while travelling alone, he recited the rosary for the deceased, as was his custom to do on every such occasion. Two robbers, seeing him approach, intended to murder him. But the grateful souls came from Purgatory to protect and assist their benefactor. They surrounded him as a guard; and the robbers, seeing the priest suddenly encircled by soldiers, fled in precipitate haste.

455. The following incident also occurred in the middle ages—that eventful period, when Italy was

convulsed with internal strife, when might triumphed over right, when blood was profusely spilt in private feuds. There was a soldier who amid all this tumult of war and personal hatred had persevered in piety, rectitude and purity of morals. He was a devout patron of the Holy Souls, and had even made a vow never to pass a cemetery without entering it if possible, and spending some time in prayer for the faithful departed. One day while taking a solitary walk he was met by a party of the enemy's soldiers. Being entirely without weapons to ward off an attack, he betook himself to flight. Scaling a wall in his way, he found himself in a cemetery. He remembers his vow; but if he tarries one moment he is lost, for his pursuers are at his heels. Nevertheless his faith and devotion assert their power. "For the love of God and the Holy Souls," he says; and then he kneels down to recite his customary prayer. But lo, his enemies have espied him; they too scale the wall and are astonished to see him kneeling devoutly in prayer. Still they push on, thinking it impossible for him to escape. But what is this? In a moment the cemetery is alive with soldiers. They form in line of battle, attack the enemy and put him to flight. All this happened in a few moments. The pious soldier had heard a disturbance going on behind him, but had not interrupted his prayer to look around. Having finished his devotion, he arose to continue his flight; but no enemy was to be seen.—Soon afterwards peace was declared between the opposing factions, and then the soldier received an explanation of the sudden disappearance of his pursuers. They told him how bravely he had been defended. Considering all the circum-

stances, there was no doubt that the Holy Souls had come to defend their benefactor, who prayed for them even while his life was in the greatest peril.

456. A still more marvellous occurrence is related of another friend of the Holy Souls. This man had some enemies—as even the best of men sometimes may have. He was a devout client of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and had a great love for the Suffering Souls. It was his practice to say every evening the Litany of the Blessed Virgin for the relief of the Poor Souls. One night, after saying his accustomed prayer, he retired as usual to his bed-room; and soon after he was profoundly asleep. Meanwhile his enemies forced their entrance into the house, went to his room, saw his clothing on a chair, and looked for their man in the bed. But it is empty; he is nowhere to be seen. To save his life God had rendered him invisible to the miscreants. Perplexed and angry at having missed their opportunity, the intruders left the house. After some days they returned. In the evening the man retired to his room and began his usual prayer. But he was drowsy, sleep overcame him; and after saying one-half of the Litany he went to bed. Meanwhile his enemies were watching him. This time he is surely in bed and shall not escape them. They enter the room and advance to the bed. Yes, he is there;—but what is this? From head to foot his body is divided into halves, and one half is gone! Full of terror at the sight, yet thinking that some other enemy had done his work before them, they hastened away. God had renewed His miracle in favor of His servant; but as he had said only half of his prayer, He had rendered only one-half of his body invisible. The next morning his

enemies met the man in the street alive and sound. They regarded him with great consternation, believing to see a ghost. Explanations were made, and a reconciliation was effected. Then they confessed their attempts on his life. Neither he nor they doubted in the least that he owed his life to the protection of the Blessed Virgin and the Holy Souls.

457. The Oratorian, Father Maganti, also experienced the gratitude of the Suffering Souls. They obtained many extraordinary favors and graces for him; for instance knowledge of the future, of secret faults, triumphs over the wiles of the devil, etc. He attributed all these supernatural gifts to the intercession of the souls in Purgatory. One day while travelling from Loretto he arrived in the town of Nocera; and immediately he went to a church of the Blessed Virgin to say Mass. Afterwards he continued his journey in company with some other travelers. The road led past a dangerous place where some days before several murders had been committed. Meanwhile a party of brigands lay in ambush for the pious pilgrims. They attacked them when they arrived, overwhelmed them and bound them fast to trees. All at once two children appeared on the hill overlooking the road and began to call so loudly and perseveringly for help, as if they intended to arouse the whole country. The brigands, who are about twelve in number, take no notice of this, except to point their muskets at the children. But the children continue to call for help; they even advance boldly towards the robbers. Seeing this the bandits become afraid and betake themselves to flight; for they are convinced that they have witnessed a supernatural apparition. The children go from tree

to tree, loosen the bonds of the pilgrims, and then disappear. The companions of Father Maganti are quite bewildered; but he simply informs them, "We owe our deliverance to two Holy Souls from Purgatory. God permitted them to appear in the form of children, to remind us of the word of our Divine Master, "Unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matth. XVIII. 3.)

458. The life of a petty prince of the middle ages furnishes us another notable example of the gratitude of the Suffering Souls towards their benefactors. This nobleman had for a time led a rather dissolute life with his courtiers. But the grace of God did not desert him—he was converted quite unexpectedly. He settled his affairs, and devoted a considerable portion of his income to foundations for the relief of the Suffering Souls. The sycophant courtiers, seeing themselves thus deprived of their customary amusements and revels, were very indignant, and conspired with a neighboring prince to rob their converted master of his estates. When he sought the aid of his former friends, they jeeringly replied, "Go to your Mass-priests and prayer-reciters among whom you have distributed your wealth. We have neither the power nor the will to help you." Abandoned by almost everyone the good prince retired to one of his castles, resolved to defend himself to the best of his ability. But his troops were greatly inferior in number to those of his adversary, who had meanwhile invaded his territory, and was now advancing with his army to drive him forth from his citadel. One morning, when his distress was at its height, he was informed that a

stranger desired his presence in the court yard. Arrived there, the prince was met by the leader of a great army, who thus addressed him, "Fear not! We are come to help you, and victory shall be ours. We are the souls that were released by means of your pious foundations. God sends us to your aid. Continue in your prayers for the faithful departed in order that on the day of battle our number may be still greater." With these words the leader and his whole army disappeared. The prince returned to his apartments and informed his servants of what had occurred, encouraging them like a second Machabee with the hope of victory. A few days later the enemy's army appeared, but to the great consternation of the troops the small remnant of their adversary's adherents were reinforced by a great host of unknown soldiers formed in battle array. The enemy lost courage and sued for peace. After the treaty was signed to the satisfaction of both parties, the prince was asked whence came the unexpected assistance that had so opportunely appeared in his defense. He told of his supernatural visitors and their promise. But when his opponent wished to see them they had vanished. When this miraculous occurrence became known, it served greatly to increase the devotion to the Holy Souls.

459. Another example: A merchant had laid in a full supply of goods, but they remained unsold for several years, so that bankruptcy seemed inevitable. In this strait he promised to have a number of Masses said for the Souls in Purgatory, and behold, in a short time he had sold out his entire stock.—A patron of the Holy Souls recited the Office of the Dead every

day for fifty years, and as a result he was successful in all his temporal affairs. He was assisted by the Holy Souls in many dangers, was comforted by them in his trials, and experienced their effective help in several law-suits.—A servant girl who was suffering much from rheumatism, and who had for a long time used all kinds of remedies without relief, at last had recourse to the intercession of the Holy Souls. She had three Masses said for them and was at once restored to health.—A man affected in the same way promised to have a picture of the Suffering Souls erected near a much frequented place of pilgrimage, and immediately his illness disappeared.

460. Concerning personal services rendered by the Holy Souls, and their interest in our bodily comfort, St. Gregory the Great relates the following incident, which occurred during his time in the diocese of Civita Vecchia. A worthy priest, who had been advised by his physician to use steam baths, was served every time most attentively by an unknown man. To reward him the priest one day offered him two loaves of blessed bread, which at that time it was customary to distribute among the faithful at Mass. Sorrowfully the man refused them, saying, "O Father, why dost thou offer me this? This is holy bread, and I cannot partake of it. I was once proprietor of this place, and was sentenced after death to come back here. If you wish to release me, offer this bread for me to the Almighty, and thus you will aid me in atoning for my sins. In token that you were heard I will not appear to you again after I shall have been released." With these words he disappeared. The priest said Mass for him every day for a week; and when he returned on

the morning of the eighth day, he found him no more.

461. Keller, in his book "Mirror for Earnest Christians," relates the following: At the beginning of the sixties a devout young lady intended to found a religious community. A number of pious maidens had declared their intention of joining her, and an appropriate house had been selected, but the necessary sum for its purchase was wanting. Nevertheless, trusting in God and relying on the help of pious benefactors, the place was bought, the new community thereby incurring a heavy debt. While looking about for a loan, the Superioress was delayed on one of her journeys, so that it was already late in the night when she arrived at the railroad station nearest the town she was traveling to. As she had to be at the place early next morning, she resolved to proceed at once on foot. The road led through a dense forest, and she was very much afraid. Reassuring herself she began to say the rosary for the Suffering Souls, when all at once she beheld at her side a young man with a lantern, who asked her to permit him to accompany her. After regarding his rather pale face for a moment she assented. On the way her guide asked her concerning the object that brought her there, and she confided to him all her doubts and anxieties. He replied with a few encouraging words. Arrived at the end of the forest he showed her a house at which she should not fail to call; and then he was suddenly gone. Next morning she related the occurrence to the priest, asking him whether he thought it advisable to apply at that house for the loan of the sum she needed. He replied, "You may try, but you will get nothing."

Nevertheless she went there, but was received very coldly. Then she related how she had been directed to this house, and described the appearance of the young man. Immediately the behavior of the man and his wife changed. The wife began to weep, while the husband hastened from the room. But he soon returned with the desired sum, saying that he could not but show himself grateful to the benefactress of his deceased son; for it was he that conducted her through the forest and directed her to his house.

462. It is impossible to condense into one volume an account of all the instances in which the Holy Souls gratefully rendered assistance to their benefactors in the manifold relations of life—help in war and personal danger, in illness, and in distress of all kinds. But what was related above is sufficient to convince even the most sceptical of the efficiency of their intercession; and together with the examples adduced from Holy Scripture these instances of their gratitude ought not to fail in moving us to charity for them. Their intercessions for their benefactors on earth are graciously heard by Him who declares that he considers as done to Himself what we do to others. In making this declaration our Lord confesses Himself our debtor, provided we exercise this charity in behalf of the Poor Souls. By our suffrages for them we secure for ourselves not only their own gratitude, but God Himself will be grateful to us for the help we have given to these Souls so pleasing to Him. He hears their prayers even when they pray to obtain temporal blessings for us.

§ 60. The Holy Souls Assist Their Benefactors in the Affairs of Salvation.

463. If the Holy Souls show themselves grateful even with regard to the temporal affairs of their benefactors, how much more solicitous will they be for the spiritual welfare of those who assisted them! They will do their utmost to preserve from the everlasting flames of hell those by whose aid they were released from the purifying flames of Purgatory.—The Venerable Colmar, Bishop of Mayence, writes: "A pious lady was greatly disturbed at the thought: 'What will become of me when I die and must appear before the tribunal of my Eternal Judge? There is a hell—and I have so often offended my God! Woe unto me if I should be rejected by the Lord!' So great did this fear become with her, that she was quite disheartened. But recollecting herself, she regained confidence; for she said, 'I will pray for the souls in Purgatory; I will assist at Mass for them every day; I will offer for them the merit of all my good works. Perhaps I shall be so fortunate as to release some of them, and then I shall no longer have cause to entertain such great fear; for these souls will pray for me, and I shall not be lost.' She was immediately reassured, and thenceforth was a devout helper of the Holy Souls."

464. A Scotchman, whose brother was stricken with sudden death, was greatly affected by the sad loss. Though he was a Protestant, he knew that into heaven "there shall not enter anything defiled." (Apoc. xxi. 27.) As the religious denomination to which he belonged did not recognize a middle state, he was greatly concerned about his brother's condi-

tion in the next world, so much so, that he abandoned himself entirely to melancholy. God, who rewards the least solicitude for the eternal welfare of the deceased, led this loving brother to the true faith. By the advice of his physician he traveled on the continent, where he met Abbe Paume. This saintly man took great interest in him, and explained to him the doctrine of the Church concerning prayer for the dead. On All Souls' day the good man visited the priest and said to him, "I am resolved to ask admission into the Church from love of my brother. I shall find great relief in being able to pray for him, and your faith not only permits, but directs me to do so, teaching that thereby I shall greatly benefit him. Your faith thus deprives death of its terrors; your love does not cease with life, but extends beyond the grave. You know the frailties of human nature, frailties that are not grievously sinful; but yet they are obstacles to perfect purity. God has revealed that there is a middle state of purification between heaven and hell. Perhaps my brother is sentenced to it, and to release him I wish to become a Catholic. This faith, which teaches me to pray for the dead, will console me and relieve my anxiety." And he was received into the Church.

465. Sister Margaret Ebner, of the Order of St. Dominic, was a great friend of the Suffering Souls, and released numbers of them by her prayers and austerities. And they were most grateful to their benefactress. As she had no greater desire than to serve God in the most perfect manner, and to arrive at the greatest degree of perfection, she recommended herself to the Holy Souls for this particular intention.

And they assisted her most effectually, so that she often remarked, "Oh, that all persons striving after perfection would have recourse to the Suffering Souls, and would make them their intercessors and helpers! They would soon make great progress in virtue and would hasten their attainment of perfection."

466. Pope Benedict VIII. relates the following: The saintly Jesuit, Father Alphonsus Lortesi, was troubled like St. Paul with great temptations. Having tried various means to rid himself of them, he had recourse to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Purity, who thereupon appeared to him and requested him to pray fervently for the souls in Purgatory. He followed this advice and was freed from his temptations.—A nobleman, a great benefactor of the Suffering Souls, was one night awakened from sleep and told that he should make his confession immediately, because he was soon to die. He did so. He received holy communion, and died shortly afterwards. Such warnings by the Suffering Souls, such admonitions to penance and reformation of life, are frequent. Hence the well-known remark of Pope Adrian IV.: "Whosoever prays for the Suffering Souls with the intention of helping them, imposes on them the obligation of gratitude and assistance."

467. Blessed Frances of the Five Wounds was notable for her intimate intercourse with the holy angels and the Suffering Souls. In reference to the latter the history of her life recounts many well authenticated occurrences, one of the most remarkable of which is the following: Death bereaved her of a friend, a lady to whom she was indebted for various benefits. For a long time afterwards Frances offered all her prayers,

sufferings and good works for the soul of her deceased friend. One day her friend appeared to her while she was engaged in prayer and revealed to her many things regarding the future life. For instance Frances asked her whether her suffrages had benefited her. The soul replied that their application was in the hands of the Blessed Virgin, and that by means of them she had received great consolation and a reduction of days and months of suffering. Frances then expressed a doubt concerning a certain offering she had made of a particular pain, and asked if it had been of benefit to her. "O, yes," the soul gratefully replied. "The very moment you began to feel the pain an angel transferred me to a place so agreeable and pleasant that I seemed to be in paradise. When I asked the angel if it were really so, he replied in the negative and said it was only an interruption of my sufferings. After your pain ceased I was returned to my torments." A short time afterwards this soul was released and re-appeared to her benefactor, thanking her for her charity.

468. A priest relates the following: "Some years ago, when I was appointed pastor of my present charge, I found that the children of the communion class had great difficulty in remembering the answers of the catechism. I did my best to assist them, advising various means from the use of which I hoped for an improvement of their memory. They did their best, but with little success. I was greatly perplexed, for they were good children, and anxious to receive their first communion, which I was in conscience bound to refuse them as long as they did not know their catechism. All at once I remembered that I had

read some examples showing how efficacious the prayer of the Holy Souls is for those who ask their aid. I now told the children to add thenceforth to their morning and evening devotions a prayer to and for the Suffering Souls, for the intention of obtaining a better memory. They followed my advice, and I was astonished at the result. The children, who had hitherto been unable to repeat any answers of the catechism that presented the least difficulty, now answered the most intricate questions very fluently; and they even comprehended and could repeat the explanations which I gave. I hope that by making this known the devotion to the Holy Souls will be increased, and that the belief in the efficacy of their prayers will be strengthened; and I am confident that my confreres will find in prayer for the Suffering Souls the same assistance in the performance of their duties as I did."

469. The following incident is related in the "*St. Benedict's Stimmen*," 1881, number 1 and 2:

One hundred years ago the reign of terror in France was at its height. Louis XVI. and Mary Antoinette had already fallen victims to the fury of the populace. France was deluged in blood. After the defeat of the Royalists near Quiberon Count Hyacinth of St. Florent, with over nine hundred of his comrades in arms, was imprisoned in Aubrey, where he expected his sentence of death. One day, while sitting near the window of his prison cell, the young Count was surprised at seeing a beautiful young lady looking in from the outside. He recognized in the lady his twin sister Hermania.

"Dear Hermania," he exclaimed, "how can you thus expose yourself to danger by coming to see me?

You well know the penalty imposed by the republic on the intercourse with royalists. You promised to be careful."

"I know, dear brother," she replied in a low voice; "but to-day is our birth-day, and I could not let it pass by without seeing you. To-day we both attain the age of nineteen; and it is the first time in our life that we do not celebrate the feast together. And, Hyacinth, I felt so depressed; I could no longer resist the desire of seeing you, to reassure myself that you are alive and well."

"As you see, I am quite well," he replied, pressing her small white hand which she reached to him through the grating. "Do you remember," he continued, "that our dear deceased mother was wont to say that we both always had the same thoughts and sentiments? I also felt very melancholy all day, very likely because you did. But now you must regain your cheerfulness, or I also shall remain gloomy."

"Do they treat you well?" the girl anxiously asked.

"I have everything I wish for except liberty," replied the brother. "I almost feel ashamed at being so well cared for, while my royalist comrades are suffering. . . But I hear someone coming. . . Good-bye, sister dear; may our next birth-day be a happier one!"

The girl left the window, walked across the grass-grown court and escaped through an opening in the wall. Hyacinth had scarcely seated himself, when the door was opened, and the republican commander entered. Politely saluting the prisoner, he addressed him as follows:

"The officers of my staff, particularly Oberon, seem to esteem you greatly."

"Oberon is always very kind to me," Hyacinth replied, without taking his eyes off a picture he had painted.

"He told me that you celebrate your birth-day to-day. How old are you?"

"Nineteen, sir!"

"At your age a person expects to live for many years to come."

"Not always, sir!" the prisoner sadly rejoined. "In these times even youth may not hope for a long life. 'Tis said, 'In times of peace the son buries his father, in times of war the father buries his son.' My parents are dead, and strangers will have to bury me."

"You are melancholy to-day, St. Florent. You must dine with us, and we will cheer you up by celebrating your birth-day."

Hyacinth accepted the invitation with thanks. After dinner, when the desert had been brought and the servants had retired, the commander addressed himself to his guests:

"The republic promulgated a law to-day that concerns you, too, St. Florent. Hitherto the prisoners made at Quiberon—those of them that are not yet twenty-one years old—were not shot. Henceforth they, too, are to be executed; and therefore the sentence includes you also. That this is the case is proved by the fact that the soldiers detailed for this purpose are ready to execute the order at once."

Scarcely had he finished speaking when a detachment of troops entered the room. Several of the republican officers joined Oberon in pleading for the young royalist's life, but in vain. Hyacinth remained cool. Standing erect before the commander, he said,

"I do not ask to be dealt with more leniently than my comrades. Since loyalty to our king has become a crime, I am as guilty as they are. But I request time to prepare myself before I go forth from the banquet hall to death."

His request was refused. Then the young nobleman turned courageously to his executioners, saying, "I am ready." And he was led forth into the beautiful moon-lit night.

The soldiers stood their prisoner up against the wall of the court and then retired a few paces. The commander observed the proceedings from the window of the hall. Suddenly a figure ran out from under the window of Hyacinth's cell, crossed the court and embraced the doomed man.

"Hermania, you here!" thus Hyacinth softly addressed his sister, meanwhile trying to free himself from her embrace.

"Fire!" cried the distracted girl. "If my brother must die, let me die with him!"

One of the officers succeeded in loosening her hold on her brother, and led her away.

"Fire!" now cried the young royalist. It was the last time that his sister heard his voice as that of one living, for in the next moment the executioners leveled their muskets, and four bullets ended the mortal career of Hyacinth de St. Florent.

Fifteen years had passed since Count Hyacinth's death. Hermania de St. Florent was thirty-four years of age; and though her features were hard and cold, they still retained much of their former beauty. Her heart had been embittered and hardened by the cruel fate of her brother; it was, alas, inaccessible to the

consolations of religion. In the first moments after her brother's execution she had cried in despair, "This trial exceeds my strength; I can not bear it." —She had to bear it; but she bore it without resignation. Her once so loving heart was closed to all human affection. Her life was blameless; she disdained the amusements and comforts of the world, and yet she did not seek peace where it was alone to be found—in resignation to the will of God. "O how treacherous is life!" she exclaimed on the fifteenth anniversary of her brother's death. She stood at the window of her chateau, and was about to retire from it, when she observed the pastor of the village coming up the road. She hastened to meet him, for she held him in high esteem. After the usual exchange of greetings the conversation drifted to the occurrences of the day, when the priest had occasion to mention the date.

"Yes," sorrowfully replied the lady; "to-day is the third of August, a date I shall never forget. To-day is the anniversary of my brother's cruel death."

The priest deemed this an auspicious moment to call her attention to the consolations of religion, and observed, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

"This is not the first time," she replied quietly but firmly, "that your reverence intimates that I should comply with the demands of religion. Your remarks indicate that you do not comprehend my character. The doctrines of the Gospel are known as well to me as they are to you, and I fully acknowledge their truth. You desire me to pray; but if I did so, I should also have to repeat the words of our Blessed

Lord, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." But this I cannot do; for I have not forgiven the murderers of my brother, and I shall and will not forgive them. True, I can no longer do them harm, for the most of them were since called before the tribunal of God; but I still have the will and desire of revenge. The very thought of it fills me with delight; for then I feel that I still possess a heart. You tell me to seek consolation at the foot of the altar. If I did so, should I not be obliged to forgive my enemies? How can I, so full of hatred and desire of revenge, kneel at the altar?—Now reverend sir, you know my exact position: can you continue to urge me to fulfil my religious duties when you know that doing so would on my part be mere mockery?"

"For the sake of your soul's salvation, my dear daughter, suppress such sentiments!" rejoined the priest in agitation. "Remember our Savior on the cross. He prayed for His executioners."

"He was God, and I am only a frail mortal."

"But Christ is our example, and all the saints strove to imitate Him."

"I am no saint!"

"True enough, alas! You are a poor, much-suffering woman. But you yourself have referred to a thought that should fill you with confidence and courage. Yes, He is our God; and because He is our God, He also has the power and the will to grant the grace and help necessary to observe His commandments. He demands that we forgive our enemies as He Himself did; and He will not refuse us His grace to do so if we place no obstacle."

"That is possible. I never thought of it."

Rising to take leave, the priest remarked, "I fear your case is a most difficult one. But I do not despair. I shall recommend you to the souls in Purgatory, by whose intercession I have often found help in cases that humanly speaking were hopeless. And if perchance your brother should be still among those souls, I will pray that he may be permitted to soften the heart of her who is so dear to him."

"My brother! You forget that he is dead fifteen years. It can not be possible that he is still in Purgatory!"

"This is a question to which we cannot give a definite answer. But this we know for certain: God's mercy is great, especially to those who suffer from man's unmercifulness. Count Hyacinth was made to suffer death suddenly and unexpectedly, and we have no evidence that he had sufficient time during the few moments accorded to him between his sentence and its execution to prepare himself duly to appear before the tribunal of God. By no means do I question his Catholic faith; but might he not have to atone for the youthful indiscretions so prevalent with young people of his class?"

Hermania was now alone; and as was her custom since her brother's death, she watched through the night following her birth-day. She could not bring herself to seek repose during that night. The old servant, who was aware of this custom, had brought lights, and had securely fastened the doors and windows of her apartments. Now she was left to her musings. She sat in her easy chair, reviewing in her mind the sorrowful past. She thought of that night when she watched under her brother's window expect-

ing his release, and saw him led to a cruel death; she saw the gleam of the muskets in the moon-light, and her brother, pale but firm, standing at the wall. But what is this?—She rubbed her eyes.--Yes, she is wide awake. She hears the slow ticking of the great clock in the hall. But there, before her—O God can it be true?—there stands her brother!—Yes, it is he, not changed like her; he is still in the bloom and beauty of his nineteenth year. But oh, how sorrowful, how dejected! And yet his look betokens resignation! There was something in his appearance that restrained his sister from advancing to meet him; she felt that there was an impassable gulf between them. He was spiritualized; she still belonged to this material world. Placing her hands on her throbbing heart, she tremblingly addressed him:

"Hyacinth, my brother, what has brought thee back to the troubles of this world?"

"Sister," replied the spirit in a solemn tone of voice, "I am come to complain of the cruelty with which I have been treated."

"I know," she hastened to rejoin; "thy death is written as with characters of fire in my heart. Thy blood calls to me to be avenged. What can I do for thee?"

"I do not refer to my death. Viewed from eternity, life seems like a grain of sand on the sea-shore. Death is but a passing pain, the threshold of the King's palace. What saddens me is that thou hast forgotten,--my dear sister, whom I so ardently loved."

"I forget thee? Did I leave a day pass without remembering thee? Were not my nights disturbed by painful dreams of thee? In the flower of my youth I

rejected for thy sake every enjoyment and amusement of life, for my heart could not rejoice without thee."

"Thy tears and despair avail me nothing. I crave thy prayer, to help me to atone for my faults. I am suffering in Purgatory for the unatoned sins of my latter years. Above all, I suffer because in the haste of my execution I forgot to pardon my murderers. I did not remember the example of our Divine Savior and of St. Stephen. I forgot that we are commanded to love our enemies. By this neglect I burdened my soul with a double guilt, because from it proceeded in part thy revengeful disposition. A long time was given thee to fulfil thy Christian duty of forgiving my murderers. Because thou wouldst not, thou couldst not pray for me. For fifteen years I waited in vain; not a single prayer was said for me on earth. My body was interred without the blessings of the Church; no priest celebrated a Holy Mass for my soul. I saw innumerable souls ascend to heavenly bliss, released by the prayers and holy communions offered for them on earth. I had to remain behind. In my last moments, already at the threshold of eternity, I consoled myself with the thought, 'My sister's prayers will follow me beyond the grave.' This very night the first *De profundis* was said for me. It obtained permission for me to come here and implore thy help. Oh, take pity on thy brother, assist him to have his punishment abridged. Love thy enemies! Mortals on earth can not comprehend the torments that harass a soul that has seen God for a short moment and is then again banished from His presence."

Hermania fell on her knees.

"O Hyacinth, pardon me! I was cruel towards thee, thinking to honor thy memory."

She covered her face with her hands and wept convulsively. Finally looking up again, the apparition had vanished; and the first dawn of morning appeared in the east. She remained on her knees, praying as she had not prayed for years. When the sound of the church bell, calling the people to five o'clock Mass, aroused her, she rose and hastened to church. The peasants were astonished at seeing their mistress kneeling in their midst, the first time in many years.

Her first prayer was for the murderers of her brother. She called to our Savior in His own words, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do!" The racking hatred that so long had tormented her and closed her heart to the soothing influence of grace vanished; and then, with scalding tears of contrition, she prayed for her brother.

After Mass she visited the good priest, and related to him her experience of the night, promising him to atone for her long neglect of duty by a truly Christian life.

"Thanks be to God" ejaculated the pious pastor. "Whether your apparition of last night was a reality or a dream, it is certain that our Heavenly Father intended thereby to remind you of your duty."

"Most certainly it was no dream," she gravely replied. "Did you say a *De profundis* for my brother?"

"Yes, I did."

"Then it was Hyacinth himself whom I saw. He told me it had been the first prayer that was said for him."

A few days later Mlle. St. Florent knelt at the altar to receive her Divine Lord in holy communion, fully reconciled to Him by a contrite confession.

Thenceforth she devoted herself to works of charity; and though not very wealthy, the poor always found her their true friend, who gave them her service if she had no money to give. Soon she was known as "the good Lady of St. Florent." To those who thanked her for her aid she was wont to reply, "All I ask in return is a prayer for my brother, not for myself." Thus she lived for twenty-five years. Finally the third of August found her on her death-bed. She had already received the last sacraments, and calmly awaited the final summons. Suddenly her features were overspread with joy. "I see Hyacinth!" she exclaimed. "He is coming in heavenly splendor to receive me and conduct me to God. He is supremely happy, and I shall soon be united with him."—She fell back: brother and sister were united in their God.

470. Not very long ago a pious Christian in Paris did his utmost to induce one of his friends, an old man who was near death, to return to God and religion by a sincere conversion. But all his efforts were in vain. Finally he had recourse to the intercession of the Holy Souls. He promised to have a certain number of Masses said for the release of the most forsaken soul, on condition that this soul would implore for his friend the grace of a true contrition. And behold, on that very day the aged sinner asked for a priest, made his peace with God and died soon after with all the signs of sincere penitence.—In the neighborhood of the imperial castle of Ambras, near Innsbruck in the Tyrol, there is an open space in the midst of a vast forest, where the mortal remains of a great number of Tyrolese defenders of their country are buried, along with the bodies of the enemies against whom they fought.

This place in the course of time became the destination of numerous pious pilgrims, who go there to pray for the Suffering Souls. So great is the number of extraordinary favors obtained there, that the trees for a great distance are covered with votive tablets testifying to the efficacy of the prayers of the Holy Souls. A new chapel recently built there also proves that the confidence of the peasants of the neighboring villages is as strong as ever.

471. To a saintly religious, Father Dominic of Jesus-Mary, there appeared the soul of a deceased artist, who asked him to warn a certain gentleman against retaining an immoral picture which the deceased had painted to his order, and to inform him that two of his sons would die in a short time. Moreover he should warn the gentleman that he himself would die soon if he did not do as requested. The good religious performed his errand, and the gentleman in great consternation gave him the picture to destroy it. Within a month his two sons really died. The gentleman repented; and he removed all his profane pictures, replacing them with religious ones.

To the Venerable Frances of the Blessed Sacrament there appeared repeatedly one of her relatives, deceased many years before, whose son was party to an unjust law suit. Despite all warnings he persisted for years in the unjust proceedings. Again his father appeared, declaring that his release depended on the termination of the law suit. Now at last the contending parties came to an agreement. They were not only reconciled, but fulfilled the other requests made by the departed soul to hasten its release. The son moreover was so affected by the occurrence that he thenceforth led a most exemplary life.

The gratitude of souls released and of souls still in torment, and the great relief given the latter by prayer, incited the Venerable Frances to the greatest fervor in suffrages for them; and not content to befriend the Holy Souls continually herself, she did her utmost to gain for the same devotion her Sisters in religion, priests, and all with whom she had occasion to converse in her position as portress of the convent. Thus she relieved and ransomed a countless number of Suffering Souls, whose gratitude she very frequently experienced.

§ 61. The Suffering Souls Assist Their Benefactors in Death and at the Tribunal of Judgment.

472. The renowned historian Cardinal Baronius relates: A man of great virtue was approaching his end and was violently assaulted by the evil spirits surrounding his death-bed. Suddenly he saw the heavens open and thousands of warriors in white garments coming to his aid. They told him that they were sent to defend him and to gain the victory for him. The dying man was greatly relieved and implored his heavenly defenders to tell him who they were. They replied, "We are the souls whom you released. We come to reward your charity, and to conduct your soul to heaven." After receiving this assurance he died.

St. Margaret of Cortona died on the 22d of February, 1297. At the very hour of her death a saintly religious in a distant city saw her soul ascend to heaven in the company of a great number of souls whom our Lord had released in consideration of the merits of His holy spouse.

473. The following remarkable occurrence was related a few years ago in the Italian newspaper *L'Unita Cattolica:* Two gentlemen, Parrini and De Witt, fought a duel in which the former was mortally wounded. Parrini was a freemason, as is evidenced from his will made two years before the duel, as follows:

FLORENCE, March 13, 1882.

To the Grand Master and the Masonic Brethren of the R∴ L∴ La Concordia.

Sound of mind and body, I hereby declare, on this the 13th day of March, 1882, my last will, and ordain by it as folows:

1) That no priest, of whatever rite or cult, shall enter my room in case I should be in danger of death by illness. 2) That after my death no religious fraternity, no priest, etc., but solely my brethren, friends and acquaintances shall attend my funeral. 3) That 500 francs be taken from my estate to be distributed at the pleasure of the Grand Master of the lodge Concordia amongst the poor widows and orphans of brethren of the said lodge. 4) That the execution of this my last will be entrusted to the Orient of said lodge, in whose secret archives a copy of it shall be preserved.

CESAR PARRINI.

On the morning of July 18th, 1884, the day of the duel, Parrini wrote another will which related solely to the settlement of his estate. In it he revoked nothing of the arrangements made in the former will relative to his death.—After sixteen or more rounds had been fought, he fell mortally wounded. He was brought in a dying condition to the Villa Torrigiani.

When informed of his approaching end, he said to one of his lady friends, "Call a priest as quickly as possible; I desire to have a priest! I promised it to you, and you know that I keep my word. Call a priest!" When the vicar of the parish, Don Louis Millinesi, entered the room, the dying man received him as a messenger from heaven. After the vicar had been alone with him for a few moments, he went to the door and called for two witnesses. In presence of these the vicar read a revocation covering everything necessary to obtain absolution from the censures incurred by joining the freemasons, engaging in a duel, and calumniating the Church in newspaper articles and pamphlets. After the reading of this document Parrini declared over the crucifix on his breast that he made solemn revocation; and then he added, "I pardon everybody the same as I implore pardon of God." The act of revocation is preserved in the archiepiscopal archives. After these preliminaries he made his confession, and everything was prepared for the ministration of the holy *Viaticum.* Meanwhile the dying man, still pressing the crucifix to his lips, continued to pray and to commend himself to the mercy of God. He received the last sacraments with all signs of piety and faith, so that all present, a non-Catholic included, were moved to tears. While the vicar administered Extreme Unction, Parrini continued in adoration of the Lord whom he had just received, and audibly repeated the acts of faith, hope, charity and contrition, and implored the aid of the Blessed Virgin. Soon after receiving Extreme Unction he expired with the name of Jesus on his lips and the crucifix on his breast.

Whence this miraculous change of heart in this man Parrini? The answer to this question is found in the fact that in his heart he had never abandoned the faith of his youth instilled into his mind by a pious mother. His apparent unbelief had proved no obstacle to his charity. The poor, as also the Suffering Souls, ever found in him their constant friend. He gave bountifully in aid of both. During all the years of his association with the masonic fraternity he had never neglected to say every day the *De profundis* for the faithful departed. Whenever one of his friends died, he was sure to say the *De profundis* for him. That this charity, although wanting in supernatural merit, was nevertheless pleasing to God, is proved by his happy death, which blessing was obtained for him by the intercession of the Holy Souls.

474. Brother Henry, a native of Louvain in Belgium, had finished his studies in Paris. After receiving holy orders he was sent to Germany as professor of theology and to be a preacher of the word of God. Wherever he went he proved himself to be a steadfast friend of the Suffering Souls; and he often experienced their gratitude. Once while in Cologne, after assisting at the funeral of a Franciscan, he continued in prayer for the soul of the religious and other departed souls, when the lately deceased Brother appeared to him, saying, "Thanks to thee, Father Henry, thanks to thee! It is due to thy fervent prayer that I was only half a day in Purgatory; and now I ascend to heaven in the company of twenty-four other souls, whom thy prayer has released from Purgatory together with myself." When this same Father Henry was sent to Wimpfen as professor of theology, his brethren related

to him the recent death of a nobleman, who had ordained in his last will that he should be interred in the Dominican church at Wimpfen. They also informed him that the deceased had been a great benefactor of the Order. Good Father Henry was so moved at this recital that he thenceforth remembered the pious nobleman's soul every day in prayer. On the anniversary of his death the deceased appeared to one of his relatives who was just praying for him, and said, "Fear not; I am your cousin. Know that by the prayer of Father Henry, professor at Wimpfen, I am released from Purgatory. Go and thank him in my name for his great charity." At last the good Father's time to die arrived. He was suffering from a very painful illness, but not unexpectedly; for it had been revealed to him long before that he would have to endure this trial. He peacefully expected the visit of his dear Mother Mary and of the Holy Souls; for he knew that they would not forsake him in death after appearing to him so often in life; and he was confident too that they would not permit him to remain long in Purgatory. And the fulfilment of his hope was revealed to a pious old lady at the moment of his death. She saw the soul of Father Henry ascend to heaven in the company of three hundred and thirty six other souls.

475. A pious Christian of Britany in France, who amongst other virtues that he practiced excelled also in charity for the Suffering Souls, was fast approaching the hour of his death. The pastor was notified to give him the last sacraments, but on account of great fatigue he sent his curate. The curate administered the last rites of religion to the dying man, and then set out to return home. On passing the cemetery

which adjoined the priest's house, the curate to his great astonishment heard a voice loudly calling out, "Arise, ye dead! Arise from your graves and hasten to the church to pray for the soul of our great benefactor who has just expired. We owe this to him in gratitude for the prayers he so often said for us." And like the prophet Ezechiel the curate had a vision. The church-door, which he had carefully closed before answering the sick-call, was wide open. In the sanctuary the lights were burning; and again he hears the voice, this time from the altar, calling the dead to prayer. At the same time he hears a great noise, the moving and rattling of bones in the graves. The dead come forth and go in procession to the church. In the sanctuary they sit down in the choir-stalls and recite in mournful accents the Office of the Dead. After it is finished, they silently return to their graves. The candles on the altar extinguish of themselves, and silence reigns as before in the deserted church. Pale with terror the curate hastens to inform the pastor of what he had seen. The latter would not believe him, but ascribed the vision to his assistant's vivid imagination. "First of all," he said, "you must find out whether your patient died, which is scarcely probable." He had not yet ceased speaking, when a messenger appeared giving due notice of the good parishioner's death. The curate was so impressed with this vision that he became a religious in the monastery of St. Martin of Tours. Later, when elected prior, he stated the occurrence in detail to his brethren.

476. Ackermann, in his book on the Poor Souls, relates that the Jesuit lay-brother Simon, and Father John Fabricius, also a Jesuit, having been great bene-

factors of the Holy Souls in life, were assisted by them in death. A great number of souls whom they had released surrounded their death-beds to console them in their last moments and to conduct their souls to heaven.

But the Holy Souls are not content with assisting their friends in death; they also show their gratitude by releasing them from Purgatory.—A saintly religious in Naples, Paula of St. Theresa, in a vision saw our Lord descending into Purgatory and singling out souls here and there to release them from their punishment. When she asked Him why He selected these souls from among so many, our Lord replied, "Because these souls during their mortal lives were noted for their charity to the Suffering Souls. I reward like with like; and therefore I release them earlier from their torments according to My promise, 'The merciful shall obtain mercy.'" Thus we see the prayer of the wise Noemi fulfilled in behalf of those who are true friends of the Holy Souls: "The Lord deal mercifully with you, as you have dealt with the dead." (Ruth 1, 8.)

477. From the foregoing we may conclude how profitable to us is our charity for the dead, and that we thereby suffer no loss, but are rewarded a hundredfold by the grateful souls themselves. If nevertheless there be Christians with hearts so indifferent and unfeeling as to be unmoved by all the motives hitherto adduced; and if these same Christians be so fortunate as to escape hell and to be imprisoned in Purgatory in order that they may cancel their debts—be assured, they will have to pay their indebtedness "to the last farthing;" for thus the Word of God clearly states,

"Judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy." (James II. 13.)

The Venerable Archangela Panigarola, prioress of St. Martha's convent in Milan, on All Souls' day had an apparition of her guardian angel who led her in spirit through Purgatory. Among other souls she saw that of her father. As soon as he recognized her he exclaimed, "O Archangela, my daughter! How can you forget your unfortunate father, suffering so terribly here! I saw so many souls released by your prayers; but me, your father, to whom you owe so much, you have forgotten." Archangela was greatly agitated at hearing this plaintive reproach; but her guardian angel said to her, "God has permitted it thus, because thy father during his life neglected the care of his salvation and had no charity for the Suffering Souls."

478. Christian soul, be more charitable: it will be to your spiritual and temporal profit.—Let us resolve to do everything in our power for the Suffering Souls. If at times we know of no soul for whom we are bound to pray in particular, let us follow the example of many pious Christians, and set apart every day of the week for a certain class of souls for whom we offer up our suffrages. For instance, to-day for the souls that were most devout to the Blessed Virgin; to-morrow for those who had a great veneration for their guardian angels; the next day for the clients of St. Joseph; again, for the most fervent adorers of the Blessed Sacrament, etc. Charity is inventive, as the saying is. If true charity inspires us, we will find many ways of helping and ransoming the Suffering Souls. If we cherish a great love for the Suffering Souls, Noemi's

prayer will be fulfilled in us: "The Lord deal mercifully with you, as you have dealt mercifully with the dead." We shall experience this mercy in life and at our death; we shall praise it in Purgatory and glorify it forever in heaven.

CHAPTER VI.

The Heroic Act of Charity for the Suffering Souls.

§ 62. What is the Heroic Act of Charity for the Suffering Souls?

479. The Heroic Act of Charity is a voluntary cession in favor of the Suffering Souls of all the good works that we personally perform during life, and that will be performed by the faithful in suffrage for us after our own departure from this world. This cession is made to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to be offered by her to God for those souls in Purgatory whom He wishes to benefit thereby, or to whom we ourselves are indebted in a particular manner. By this act we voluntarily and magnanimously resign everything that might in any way be acceptable to God as atonement for the punishment incurred by our own sins; and all this we place in the hands of the Blessed Virgin for the relief of those Suffering Souls whom she desires to favor.—God is a just Judge. If we have sinned, though we may have repented of and confessed our sins, He will sentence us to undergo some temporal pun-

ishment. This temporal punishment is a debt which we have incurred, and which we must cancel by penitential works. These works of penance are as it were the ransom by which we purchase immunity from punishment in the next world. If our confessor imposes on us works of penance sufficient to pay off this our debt, and we perform these works well, we are thereby released from all further punishment. But if our confessor does not impose sufficient penance on us, we must voluntarily perform works of satisfaction sufficient to cancel our debt. If we do not do this, God sends us trials and sufferings; if we suffer these patiently and in a spirit of penance, He accepts them in payment for our debt. But if God does not send us sufficient sufferings, or if we do not bear them in a spirit of penance, we shall have to go to Purgatory after death; and there we shall be obliged to pay off the balance of our debt, not by voluntary acts of penance, but by sufferings imposed by God's judicial sentence. And of this place of punishment our Savior Himself says, "Amen I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence, till thou pay the last farthing." (Matth. v. 26.)

We can therefore atone for the temporal punishment of our sins by four kinds of penitential works: 1) By such as are imposed by our confessor; 2) by such as we perform of our own free volition; 3) by such as are prescribed for the gaining of indulgences; 4) by such as God Himself imposes on us by sending us trials, sickness, poverty, etc., provided we suffer these afflictions patiently and in a spirit of penance.— Now, if we are inspired with a great love for the Suffering Souls, we will offer all these acts of penance in

favor of these beloved spouses of Christ, instead of performing them in view to our own atonement, thus apparently forgetting ourselves entirely. This is indeed a heroic, a magnanimous charity.

480. But, Christian soul, perhaps you think: If I make this heroic act, and give up all my good works in favor of the Suffering Souls—what will become of me at the end of my life?—Do not be disturbed, but ponder well the following.

By this act we yield to the Suffering Souls only that fruit or spiritual profit of our good works, which comes to us personally by way of atonement; that is, by making this act we surrender to the souls in Purgatory only the atoning value of our good works. As to the fruits of merit and intercession, they remain our own; for the personal merit of a good act can never be ceded to others, and the fruit of intercession for ourselves and others is distinct from and independent of the atoning value of our good works. The results of merit and intercession are the following: 1) reconciliation with God; 2) increase of sanctifying grace; 3) augmentation of our glory in heaven; 4) increase of actual grace, necessary and useful in this life for the performance of good works. Besides, our prayers and good works obtain for us consolation in adversity, the grace to resist temptations, preservation from temporal evils, etc. All this is reserved to us: the remission of temporal punishment alone is what we sacrifice by the heroic act of charity.

481. To arrive at a better comprehension of the rich profit gained by every good work—and this profit is really a five-fold one—let us consider in detail the fruits issuing from the performance of good works.

Above all we must conciliate God's justice in case we have committed sin; and only after this has been accomplished will His mercy grant us the special help of His grace to attain true contrition and sincere conversion. By sin we offend the majesty of God and provoke His anger to inflict punishment. Among the punishments of sin decreed by our just and holy God one of the most severe is that he denies to the sinner, in just retribution, special and more abundant graces. But inasmuch as every good work is a work of atonement, the performance of such works will serve to appease the wrath of God, to disarm His justice, and to regain His favor. The atoning efficacy of the work reconciles Him, and disposes Him through the merits of Jesus Christ to remit wholly or in part the punishment incurred. The merits of our Savior draw down upon man the favor of God; and so the sinner is moved by faith, hope, charity and contrition to return to God and to receive worthily the holy sacraments, by which he is sanctified and becomes again a child of God. This fruit of a good work can not be ceded to others. Reconciliation with God is an effect inseparable from the individual that obtains it.

482. A pious Russian general was the intimate friend of a priest. One day the priest chanced to pass through the village in which the general resided, when he felt himself strangely impelled to visit his friend. But as he was pressed for time, he resisted the impulse and intended to pass on. But the thought returned so persistently that he finally yielded. Scarcely had the general recognized his visitor, when he exclaimed, "Thanks be to God that you came! My

wife, who as you know is a Protestant, is dying. I hope she will not refuse your assistance." The priest went to see her, and had the happiness to receive her into the Church.—What had obtained this grace for her?—She had made the resolution, as was seen later in her diary, not to let a day pass without performing some act of charity.—A zealous priest was so convinced of the efficacy of charitable works in obtaining conversions, that when he one day had disposed an infidel lawyer on his death-bed to make a sincere confession, he confidently asked him, "By what work of charity have you obtained this grace?" The dying man at first remembered none; but when the priest insisted, he replied, "I now remember that for charity's sake I once assisted a poor widow to gain a law suit, which had threatened to deprive her unjustly of her little property."

483. Every good work aids in effecting man's reconciliation with God. It moves God to grant the sinner more grace, so that he may be disposed to turn away from sin and to return to the friendship of his Heavenly Father. This grace finally impels the sinner to seek complete reconciliation by contrition, confession and sacramental absolution. The greater our contrition, the more perfect will be our reconciliation with God. God dwells with His grace in such a reconciled soul. This grace is an emanation of the divine nature, of the sanctity of God, and truly sanctifies the soul. By this grace the sinful state inherited from Adam becomes extinct in us; a new life begins, a supernatural life in God, which makes the soul—God's own image—more and more beautiful, and renders man according to the words of St. Peter, "a partaker of the

divine nature." (II. Pet. 1. 4.)—This fruit of reconciliation with God is distinct from the fruit of atonement. First there must be reconciliation; and only after this has been effected, can atonement for the temporal punishment of sin follow.

484. Every good work not only disposes the soul for the reception of sanctifying grace, but also increases this grace within the soul. By this grace we are made holy and pleasing to God; our souls are adorned with supernatural virtues; we are rendered capable of gaining merit; we are and remain children of God and heirs of heaven. Every soul in the state of grace is a child of the Eternal Father, a spouse of Jesus Christ, a temple of the Holy Ghost, a consort of the angels and saints. Hence by the increase of sanctifying grace we also grow in holiness and are rendered more pleasing to God; we grow in virtue and in merit; we insure our election to heaven and merit a higher place in the heavenly kingdom. Sanctifying grace may be likened to capital which increases by interest and compound interest. Every good action performed in the state of grace—every combat against sin, every victory over temptation, every act of contrition for sins mortal or venial, or for sins perhaps long ago remitted, every worthy reception of the sacraments, every prayer, etc.—all these works performed in the state of sanctifiying grace augment this grace within us, thus rendering our souls more and more pleasing to God.

485. In gaining an increase of sanctifying grace by means of our good works we even augment the value and meritoriousness of the works themselves. Suppose an artist has received two hundred dollars

for a painting. By the work performed on the painting he has increased his artistic abilities, and the next painting he produces is so much better than the first that he receives three hundred dollars for it. Now if his skill and its reward increase with every new painting, how proficient and wealthy he must finally become! A hasty sketch by Raphael is prized more highly, though done in an hour, than a painting on which some obscure artist was engaged for years. It is the genius, the artistic skill of the painter which renders a painting valuable.—The same is true in spiritual life. Sanctifying grace is the genius by which our works are rendered valuable. By the supernatural virtues infused into us together with grace we perform good actions, which may be called our works of art for heaven. By every such work sanctifying grace is increased in the soul; and the virtues germinating in and growing from this grace naturally increase with it. Consequently the work following becomes more valuable than the one preceding it, and therefore merits a greater reward.—If this be so, what a wealth of grace, what a beauty must a soul possess that has persevered in grace for twenty, thirty years, a soul that has performed meritorious actions every day, every hour, yes, almost every minute of the day! What a splendid crown must await such a soul in heaven! The meritoriousness of every good work like the fruit of reconciliation with God is entirely personal and cannot be ceded to others.

486. Increase of grace and increase of merit are correlatives, whose reward responds to the degree they have both attained. The eternal bliss of heaven is the reward of our good works performed in the state of

grace. These works are not solely *our* works; but they are in a certain sense the works of Christ dwelling and operating in us by sanctifying grace. Whence have the branches the power to bring forth fruit except from the vine? And the tree, is it not perfected by the process of grafting? Thus sanctifying grace unites us with Christ, and it is by His power and merit that our good works are performed in a manner to make them valuable. By sanctifying grace Christ lets us share in His merits. Our works, indifferent in themselves, become supremely valuable when He adds to them the infinite value of His merits, of His most Precious Blood.

487. All men dying in sanctifying grace will be admitted to the beatific vision of God and to the joys of heaven; but the reward will not be alike nor equally great for all. Even in this world the laborer's hire is in proportion to the amount and quality of his work. God called all men to serve Him and thereby to gain heaven. But the Apostle says, "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor." (I Cor. III. 8.) The longer one has persevered in the service of God, the more good works he has performed, and the more perfect they were, the greater will be his reward, the more precious will be his crown in heaven. He is rewarded according to his merit. For this reason the Blessed Virgin Mary, being "full of grace," surpasses all others in glory. Thus also the apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins and the host of other saints, receive glory and reward in heaven in proportion to the measure of grace they attained and co-operated with, and the degree to which they increased it while living on earth. And the

poorest Christian, forsaken, misjudged, reviled and persecuted here; the overworked servant, the oppressed widow, the defrauded laborer, the distressed sick—they are greater in heaven than mighty kings and queens, than renowned statesmen and scholars, greater in proportion to the superiority they attained by their good works. The good works of the Christian, made valuable through the merits of Christ, are his purchasing price of heaven; they gain for him a reward, a crown, a recompense corresponding to the merits gained by their performance. Every good work contributes to his glorification in heaven. Everything that a Christian in the state of grace does with the intention of fulfilling the holy will of God, to honor and glory his Maker—all such works, even the least, are ennobled, perfected and rendered meritorious for eternal life by sanctifying grace. Hence Christ so lovingly exhorts us, "Lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven." (Matth. VI. 20.)

488. Effective as our good works may be to bring about our reconciliation with God, to increase sanctifying grace in our souls, and to augment our glory in heaven, these fruits produced by them are independent of the fruit of atonement. They always remain the property of him who performed the good works in the state of grace. By every good work we can also implore of God grace for ourselves or for others, which He grants if no obstacle intervenes. These graces are given to assist us in this world. In bestowing them God wishes to make us more solicitous for eternity; by means of them we are to lead more holy and meritorious lives. The supplicatory fruit of our good works therefore moves God to give us more grace in order

that we may grow in perfection; or in case we pray for such as are in the state of sin, that God may give them the grace of conversion. Good works moreover obtain for us preservation from temporal punishments; that is, God either does not visit us with the temporal punishments which we deserved, or if He does, He lessens or mitigates them. It is for this very purpose that the faithful perform so many good works of devotion, mortification and charity—that is, works of prayer, fasting and alms-giving. In the state of grace they often receive more additional grace than they have a right to expect. The faithful servant who employs his talents (the grace of God) well, receives as reward not only "the joy of his Lord," that is, eternal bliss—before he gets the reward promised he receives more talents (grace); "for to every one that hath, shall be given, and he shall abound" (Matth. xxv. 29); that is, he that co-operates with grace will receive still more grace.

489. In His foreknowledge of the prayers, sufferings, virtues and merits of His Divine Son God granted many graces to mankind even before redemption was accomplished. In like manner does He also grant many graces in the foreknowledge of *our* prayers, and of the prayers and sacrifices of the Church, especially to sinners that they may be saved by His grace. Masters of spiritual life ascribe these sudden effects of grace to various causes. The most Precious Blood of Christ, by which the human soul was ransomed; the inscrutable mercy of God; some good work—such as an alms-deed, a prayer, etc.—once performed or practiced, and perhaps long since forgotten; penances and intercessions by others; the invisible ministry of the

guardian angel, who at the decisive moment redoubles his efforts for his ward; above all, the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and that of our patron saints, and the suffrages offered up for us after our death—these are some of the causes pointed out by spiritual writers. What a consolation lies in this doctrine of the intercessory power of every good work! In the foreknowledge of our future prayer God often grants a sinner the grace of a good death; and in consideration of our actual prayer He even consents to release a soul from the expiatory flames of Purgatory. The prayers which console us at this hour have in the past assisted in releasing that soul we so dearly love.

490. The following impressive example will serve to elucidate this doctrine. St. Gertrude was once informed of the death of a man who had led a very worldly-minded life. From compassion for the sorrow of his relatives she prayed for him a long time. At last his soul appeared to her in a deformed shape, black and mournful. The saint thenceforth redoubled her prayer and implored Jesus to favor and pardon this soul. Our Lord consented and asked her, "In what manner shall I favor this man? Shall I pardon all his sins and release him?" Gertrude feared that this might not accord with divine justice. But Jesus replied, "It would not be contrary to My justice, if thou wouldst confidently implore Me to do so, because at his death I foresaw thy prayer, and therefore I disposed him that he might receive and profit by thy charity." The saint now answered, "Then, O Lord, Thou source and cause of our salvation, I beseech Thee to complete this work of Thy mercy in the manner most acceptable to Thee, because Thy grace

inspires me with full confidence in Thee." Scarcely had she finished, when the deceased's soul appeared to her in human form, cleansed and purified.

491. In the life of Sister Mary Dionysia, a nun of the Visitation, we read that nine years before her death the Lord led her after communion to the confines of Purgatory. It was on the feast of our Lady of Angels. He showed her the soul of a prince in Purgatory who had been killed in a duel, but who in consideration of her future suffrages received the grace of true contrition at the very moment of his death. Our Lord exhorted her to pray for this soul with particular fervor. At the same time she saw the whole life of this prince, how he had lived according to the principles of the world; and now perhaps he would have to suffer to the day of the general judgment. She felt such compassion for him because of his torments, and at the same time she was filled with such admiration of God's mercy—the mercy of Him who had preserved the man from hell during the perpetration of the very act whereby he had deserved it—that she thenceforth devoted her whole life, nine years and three months, to atone for him; and she even offered her life if she could but obtain for this soul a mitigation of punishment. She declared moreover that she was moved less by the contemplation of the wretched state of this soul, than by being informed how miraculously the soul was saved from perdition. It seemed to her that the grace whereby this man was saved was an emanation of the supreme love and goodness of God; for the act by which this prince's death was caused was one deserving eternal damnation. On his part he had done absolutely nothing to which grace might

attach itself. But in virtue of the communion of saints he shared in the prayers that had been said for him and were foreseen to be said for him in future; and as he had preserved the faith, he was not unlike a dry twig that easily ignites, so that when the scintillation of divine grace touched the centre of his soul, the fire of divine love was immediately enkindled in it and produced the saving effect. God had made use of the instinct by which we call on His help when in immediate danger of death, thereby impelling Him to co-operate with actual grace. And this grace is more effective than we can imagine; it operates more quickly than the twinkling of an eye. It produces its effect in almost less time than is required to give it its first impulse.—We have an example of this in the conversion of St. Paul, blinded bodily and enlightened spiritually in a moment. In his last moment the prince regained consciousness, and as it were instinctively called on God for help; and this was the same moment when grace touched him. Co-operating with it and aided by it, he made an act of perfect contrition and was saved. "Since the time the devil is a devil," observed the saintly Sister, "he perhaps never experienced a greater disappointment than when he saw himself deprived of this prey. For he had no knowledge of the interior disposition of his victim during those moments of grace that had been accorded the dying man."

492. In this manner does every good act appeal to the Divine Heart of Jesus to obtain for us saving grace for time and eternity. This effective appeal of our good works is a distinct fruit, a fruit wholly independent of the atoning value of these same works.—How

bountiful is our good God who gives us for every good work so rich a harvest, a five-fold reward! Every act performed in the state of grace and from supernatural motives acquires for us the following benefits: 1) it enriches us with a merit for eternal life; 2) it appeases God's anger; 3) it increases sanctifying grace; 4) it augments our heavenly reward; 5) by its intercessory power it obtains actual graces for this life. These acts most assuredly do not lose anything of their efficiency and value if God deigns to receive them also in atonement for punishment incurred: hence the same act may be both meritorious and atoning.

493. The *merit* of a good work, in so far as it gives a claim for a reward in heaven, can *not* be ceded to someone else; for it necessarily belongs to the person who performed the work and thereby deserved the reward. In this sense nobody can yield the merits of his good works to another, because "every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor." But as to the *atoning or satisfactory value* of these works by which the debt of temporal punishment contracted through sin is cancelled—this can be ceded to others, and in such a manner, too, that atonement and satisfaction are really made.

Now, Christian soul, if you repeat your question, "What portion of our good works do we give to the Suffering Souls by the heroic act of charity?"—the answer is, "The atoning value only". Everything else resulting from our good works—appeasement of God's anger, increase of sanctifying grace, augmentation of our reward in heaven, acquirement of actual grace in this life—all this we retain for ourselves.

494. Oh, the precious gifts that we can obtain from the bountiful goodness of our Lord by our prayers and good works! Our most indifferent, lowly and insignificant actions, such as eating, drinking, our daily labor, our rest, everything that we do in the state of grace from a desire to fulfil the holy will of God and thereby to please our Heavenly Master—everything is ennobled, perfected and rendered meritorious for eternity by sanctifying grace. · Hence the poorer a man is, the more infirm, the more despised of men, the richer he will be in the sight of heaven, if he daily offers to God his poverty, his infirmities, his misery, all his sufferings and trials, and bears them in patience for the love of God. For this reason St. Paul exhorts us, "Therefore whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all for the glory of God." (I Cor. x. 31.) And Christ our Lord Himself assures us, "Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward." (Matth. x. 42.) —Let us therefore be more zealous in the performance of good works! Above all let us be careful not to lose the state of sanctifying grace by mortal sin! Let us be solicitous to renew our pure intention every morning, so as not to miss these great merits!

495. By the heroic act of charity we relinquish to the souls in Purgatory the diminution and remission of our temporal punishments, whether gained by our own good works, or obtained for us through the prayers and good works of others during life and after death. Hence by this act we voluntarily cede to the Poor Souls whatever share we have in the atonement

made by the celebrating of Holy Masses, by the offering of prayers, by the giving of alms, by the gaining of indulgences and by the performing of good works by and for us; so that for ourselves we rely wholly on the infinite mercy of God. In this sense we donate to the Suffering Souls our own merits and the merits of others. We bind ourselves to this by a formal promise. Hence this act is sometimes though improperly called a *vow*. It is simply a voluntary act not binding under pain of even venial sin. It need not be expressed in words in order to gain the indulgences and privileges granted for this act. It is not necessary to repeat it often; yet its renewal from time to time is recommended, because thereby our charity will be re-kindled, and we will devote ourselves with fresh fervor to the release of the Suffering Souls.

§ 63. The Practice of the Heroic Act of Charity.

496. When we are about to perform an act pleasing to God or beneficial to our neighbor, human nature is inclined to make us fear that we are going too far or are doing too much. Hence we are easily satisfied with what we do and imagine that God is satisfied with us also. Our zeal is not ardent; the words of Scripture do not apply to it, "The fire never saith, it is enough." (Prov. xxx. 16.) Our sacrifices are therefore of a limited character. And this first fault generally causes another; for once having resolved to reserve something to ourselves, we rarely follow the example of Abel, but rather that of Cain. What we esteem highly, what is dear to us—that we select for ourselves; and God and our neighbor must content themselves

with whatever we can spare without self-denial. Hence our sacrifice is but too often one that costs us no effort. Moreover, the motives of our good works are often not pure, and hence they are of little or no value before God. We seek to please men; we do not wish to be rated lower than others; we desire to please ourselves. What our Lord said of the pharisees may therefore and perhaps often be applicable also to us, "Amen I say to you, they have received their reward." (Matth. VI. 16.) Finally, our sacrifices very often proceed from vanity and are corrupted by self-interest.

497. Instead of examining ourselves closely on this point—which scrutiny would most probably result to our confusion—, let us rather view the grand example of heroic charity given us by Christians of former ages, and so learn to avoid our faults for the future. It is self-evident that charity must be manifested by actions. Of this truth St. Gregory was so convinced that he maintains, as a principle of Christian life, that where there is action there is charity; but let there be ever so much declaration of charity, if action be wanting, charity is defective. Nevertheless acts—works alone—are not the sole proof of charity. It is proved even better by trials. Works are performed by voluntary selection; trials come to us against our will. Works show themselves exteriorly and are often rendered worthless by vainglory; trials are considered as punishments, and therefore they humble us. Works are performed when and where our inclination prompts us to perform them; to trials we must submit always and as long as it pleases heaven. Not to be overwhelmed by them we must have a great love of God. There have been men who have accompished

great things for God, but they did not stand the test of tribulations. Hence it follows that charity must be the more ardent, the more difficult the trials that must be borne, be they spiritual or corporal trials. Now judge for yourself from the following examples what a high degree of charity must have been attained by those who undertook so great works for God and for their deceased brethren.

498. First let us consider the great solicitude with which all nations of the earth sought, from natural instinct, to honor the dead and to come to their aid.—The display and pomp of the ancient Gauls at their funerals is almost incredible; their perverted sense of devotion to their dead led them even to cruelty and superstition. Julius Cesar, in his book *De bello Gallico* (VI. 19.), relates that they cremated together with the deceased not only everything that he held dear, but also his slaves and freed-men, his furniture, weapons, horses, dogs, etc.—Could they do more to prove their devotion to his memory, their love for him?

499. The ancient Romans were no less anxious to honor their dead. During the cremation of the corpse those attending went repeatedly around the funeral pyre, moving in procession to the sound of doleful music; and at every round the weeping relatives would throw into the flames some costly pledge of their affection for the deceased. Thus not only the clothing and war trophies of the deceased were burned together with his corpse, but the wives tore out their hair and threw their rings and bracelets into the fire. Others, despite the prohibition of the law, mutilated themselves in the excess of their grief; and some wives even sprang into the flames to be consumed

with their husbands, as is related by Cicero, Suetonius, Pliny and other authors. This latter circumstance reminds us of the custom of the natives of India mentioned by Cicero. The natives of that country were given to the practice of polygamy; and so it happened sometimes that the wives struggled with one another for the privilege of being cremated alive with the deceased husband, because the one selected for it was considered the favorite.

500. The pagans preserved the ashes of their relatives in an urn of clay, bronze, marble or gold, according to the wealth and rank of the deceased. During the funeral services the surviving relatives wept so profusely, that small vases called lacrymatories were filled with their tears. These vases were placed next to the ashes of the deceased; and over the tomb was placed a burning lamp, to indicate that their love and grief would be everlasting, that they would ever have tears in their eyes and love in their hearts for their departed kinsman.—To perpetuate the memory of her husband, king Mausolus, queen Artemisia had a tomb constructed which was regarded as one of the seven wonders of the world. Not content with this external demonstration of her love, she placed the ashes of her husband into a golden cup, mixed them with a beverage and courageously drank them, thus burying him in her own bosom.—The funeral celebration which Alexander the Great arranged for his friend Hyphaestion surpassed all other deeds performed by this king. The pyre alone is estimated to have cost eleven million dollars.—Miltiades was sentenced to pay a certain sum; as he was not able to do so, he was cast into prison and died there. As the term of his im-

prisonment had not expired at the time of his death, the authorities would not make arrangements for his burial. His son Cimon immediately offered himself to serve out the unexpired term, and thus he procured his father's interment.—A beautiful example of filial devotion given by a pagan!

501. Should our charity for the deceased, supernatural and infused by God Himself, not be incomparably more ardent and effective? If these pagans had been Christians, what would they not have done to release the souls of those they loved from the torments of Purgatory and to open heaven to them? And now, behold the indifference of Christians; behold the small number of those who have at heart the release of the Holy Souls! On the other hand, consider how great is the number of those who ape the extravagant funeral display of the modern pagans of our day! Is vanity to triumph over true Christian charity, frivolity over piety, the American pagan over the Roman Catholic? Shall natural affection have the power of producing heroic deeds of charity while Christian charity stands vanquished?—O piety without essence, charity without works, devotion without effect—if we are not moved to compassion by the fiery torments suffered by the Holy Souls! Pagans will sit in judgment over us on the last day, and will accuse us of believing one way and acting another, because we did little or nothing for our departed friends!

502. Great and heroic as are the works of the pagans for their deceased, the deeds of zealous Christians for the faithful departed greatly surpass them. To be productive of self-sacrificing, heroic members who hasten to assist the Suffering Souls, is one of the

beautiful prerogatives of the Catholic Church, and a distinctive mark by which she is known from other denominations. The great number of her heroes of charity and the diversity of their practices in favor of the Suffering Souls is truly wonderful. No country is so sterile, no century so barbarous, but it produced its heroes; there is no work of charity to which the Church cannot point as an example; no day of the year on which she does not remind us of a model of some charitable practice for the repose of the dead.—The wise men of pagan times are praised; their moral rigor, austere principles and intellectual vigor are lauded; incidents of their lives are pointed out as examples for imitation. But—not to mention the difference between Christian and pagan virtue—what are two or three good men in so many centuries when contrasted with the countless number of Christian saints? After the Greeks have pointed out their Socrates, their Cimon, the Romans their Cato—there are not many more left to them. And the Catholic Church?—All saints in heaven, and all true and zealous members of the Church militant are heroic friends of the Suffering Souls!

503. Heroic acts of charity are not restricted to one class of benefactors, or to one kind of works. Zealous charity for the Suffering Souls has ever been inventive in its modes of expression; and accordingly it has produced that beautiful and harmonious diversity which is a joy to the Church, an honor to humanity, and an effective means for the continual population of heaven. Search the bleak deserts, the snowy mountain peaks and the wooded vales throughout the world: you will find heroes of charity everywhere. Every age,con-

dition and sex has its representatives. You find heroes and heroines of charity in palaces and on thrones. Remember the holy king St. Louis of France. He wore the habit of St. Francis' Third Order of Penance beneath the royal purple; his tender hands were stained with bandaging the leprous sores of beggars; his alms were scattered broadcast from the Seine to the Jordan. Behold him in the manifold character of a just ruler, a wise law-giver, a brave warrior, a loving husband, a kind father, a devout son of the Church; and with all these saintly virtues he joined a tender charity for the Suffering Souls!—And again, turn your eyes to the lowly shepherds of the plains. Their virtues were hidden to the world; their virtuous deeds were unknown except to the all-seeing eye of God; and yet the Church has sought them out and accords to them the honor of her altars—for instance, St. Genevieve in ancient times, St. Germaine Cousin in our own! Remember St. Alexius, the outcast in his father's own house, in times so long ago that they seem ages; and again, see the holy pilgrim of the last century, St. Benedict Joseph Labre, begging his way from shrine to shrine:—they all are friends, heroic friends, of the Holy Souls; their every act is a prayer, an offering for the release of these sufferers. O wonderful fecundity of grace and charity, yielding every day new and living proofs of its efficiency, productive of heroes in all phases of life, in every age, condition, character and sex, and yet ever retaining its creative power! O wonderful religion, begetting in its saints the true type of heroism, regenerating human society in the charity of Christ!

504. Heroism is but another word for fortitude; and where is greater fortitude to be found than with

the faithful, generous followers of Christ? True, the world laughs at them. It has ever been so, as Holy Scripture informs us, "The simplicity of the just man is laughed to scorn." (Job XII. 4.) The world demands virtues of a different type, which call forth the praise of men: certain virtues of position, easy of practice and seldom put to a test; acts of bravery applauded by admiring crowds; a life of glory, fame and renown; an end like that of the tragedian counterfeiting death on the stage, and closing the scene with a striking utterance. This the world considers to be the height of heroism. But to overcome self; to be ruler of one's heart; to pardon injuries and to bear trials; to despise the honors which the world idolizes; to love truth to the point of giving one's life for it; to be resigned in all the vicissitudes of life; to go through life quietly and peacefully, leaving no other foot-prints but those of charity; to forgive and love one's enemies:—is this not great heroism? And such was the heroism of the devout friends of the Suffering Souls, of those who offered themselves as victims of charity for them. Their virtue was not the caprice of a moment, but the result of a life-long combat, until finally it became and remained a fixed and stable disposition of their being. If we read their utterances or consider their achievements, we find no attempt at appearing great before the world. Always engaged in combat with the world, with hell and with the passions, and ever victorious, their mode of life was simple and unostentatious. The world accuses them of narrow-mindedness, because of their humility and contempt of fame. The children of the world seek their greatness in public applause and display: but is not the disdain of such greatness a proof of real heroism?

Does it not require great courage to fulfil the promises made in baptism of renouncing satan, his works and his pomps? Or is the world to be called strongminded because it succumbs to the temptations of pride while the friends of the Holy Souls triumph over them? Moreover, these helpers of the sufferers in Purgatory despised the world, not from the motives which actuate so-called philosophers who veil their pride with poverty and appear to disdain fame in order to achieve it more easily. What could the friends of the Suffering Souls gain by hypocrisy? Unknown to the world, known only to God, the good works of these holy Christians were performed for heaven, not for transitory honor.

505. Yet we must not infer from this that the friends of the Holy Souls hid their light under the bushel (Matth. v. 16), that they did not shine by the light of their good example. History abounds with their words spoken and deeds performed in favor of the suffering spouses of Christ. They were indeed heroes, rejoicing at being able to do and to suffer something for the Holy Souls—for example, those brave virgins who defaced their beauty with their own hands to escape the assaults of libertines, and offered up this heroic act for the relief of those souls in Purgatory that suffered for sins of impurity; those apostolic men who defied the icy blasts of the northpole and the scorching heat of the tropics, who travelled through barren wildernesses and across unknown seas to bring the glad tidings of the Gospel to barbarious nations, and suffered all the fatigues of their holy calling for the souls of the faithful departed. Others sanctified themselves amid the dangers of the world

and found ways and means to live *in* it without being *of* it. If they had not gold to give to the poor, they gave the cup of cold water in a spirit of charity, sure that even this would be rewarded in heaven. They were ever solicitous to dry the tears of the distressed, to minister to the sick, to comfort the afflicted, to loosen the bonds of prisoners, to relieve the oppressed and to strengthen the weak. Knowing that man is subject to so much wretchedness and misery, their aim was to aid and encourage, to instruct and improve him, and thus to assist him on his way through the portals of death; and all this they did to atone for the Suffering Souls. These heroes achieved a three-fold result: their virtues secured for them a blissful eternity; for the souls of Purgatory they obtained relief and deliverance; and to their survivors they left an example of heroic fortitude. And though the enemies of God and the Church may have destroyed the monuments of their zeal, the spirit that prompted it still animates their followers: they, too, are steadfast friends of the Holy Souls.

506. Let us view at random some of these heroic benefactors of the souls in Purgatory.—There is St. Christina. History relates wonderful instances of her charity for the Holy Souls. She died in 1182, being then thirty-two years of age. Her biographers relate that her soul was transported by angels into Purgatory to witness its torments. Thence the angels brought her to heaven before the throne of God. Our Lord regarded her with complacency and said, "Christina, My daughter, thou art here in the abode of bliss. I leave thee free to choose: thou canst remain here among the blessed, or thou canst return for some years to the

world, there to come to the aid of the Suffering Souls by thy good works. If thou choosest the former thy salvation is accomplished and thou hast no longer anything to fear; but if thou choosest to return to the earth thou shalt there suffer martyrdom for the relief of these unfortunates, and for the increase of thy reward." Christina did not hesitate to leave heaven. Returned to life, she thenceforth astonished all by the rigor of her penance. She fasted continually; she scourged herself most cruelly; she threw herself into thorns—all for the Suffering Souls. Finally, after some years of incredible austerities, she was called to receive the reward of her heroic charity.

507. St. John Damascene, in his ardent love for the Holy Souls, wrote a remarkable dissertation on Purgatory, in which he relates that Josaphat, king and hermit, on the death of his father Abenner, remained at his grave for seven days without eating, drinking or sleeping, to invoke divine mercy for the departed soul. "My Lord and my God," he continued to exclaim, "remember not the sins of my father, destroy the handwriting of his debt, and grant eternal rest to his soul." After having repeated these words again and again for a long time, he was rapt in ecstacy and saw two diadems of glory resplendent with precious stones and alike in beauty. He was told that one of these crowns was destined for his father, the other for him. His first thought was: "How can this be? My father, who scarcely did anything for heaven, shall receive the same crown as I, who have left my throne to suffer these mortifications?" He was then informed that one day he would be told the reason, and that in part he was himself the cause. The royal hermit adored

the inscrutable counsels of God and asked pardon for his fault. He continued to pray for his father's soul, and had the consolation to know that he was admitted to heaven.

508. One of the most renowned friends of the Holy Souls was St. Theresa. She not only prayed for them herself, but spread the devotion to them to all the houses of her Order. On All Souls' day, after the Mass of Requiem, she was wont to assemble the community to hear an instruction on the means of helping the Suffering Souls; and every member gave a written promise to say some prayers and to perform some good works for the Holy Souls during the coming year. Theresa herself, a model of heroic charity, offered up for them all her good works and the atoning merits of her suffering. And her sufferings especially were very great. At the beginning of her religious life she became so ill that she had to return home. Finding no relief there, she returned to the convent, where she continued to suffer from all kinds of maladies for over twenty years. During all this time she remained the constant friend of the Holy Souls, offering up for them all her trials. She saw in spirit the ineffable torments of Purgatory, and she never ceased her suffrages. She well knew that God sends us sufferings to enable us to atone for our sins; nevertheless her heroic charity taught her that He accepts this atonement also in favor of others. She lived and died a heroine of charity.

509. To convert barbarous nations and to gain them for Christ St. Francis Xavier crossed the seas, exposed himself to innumerable dangers, and died consumed by charity, forsaken and alone on the bleak shore

of a desert island. He was so ardent a friend of the Suffering Souls, that he often walked the streets of cities ringing a bell and exhorting the people to pray for them. In Malacca he appointed a man to go at midnight through the streets with a lantern and a bell, and to call out, "Pray for the souls of the faithful departed suffering in Purgatory!" Scorned by the world, he was a hero of charity before God.

510. Among the numerous servants of God who aided the Suffering Souls by prayer and exercises of penance must also be mentioned the Venerable Dominic of Jesus-Mary, who died in Vienna, Austria, in 1630. A man that spent himself for the salvation of his fellow-men, he could not forget the Suffering Souls. In his writings, published after his death, we find many instances of his intercourse with the spirit world, which clearly prove how devoted he was to the Holy Souls. By his prayer and extraordinary works of self-denial and mortification he released a great number of souls, among them the soul of his own father. Once, while saying Mass in a chapel where there was an ancient miraculous picture of the Blessed Virgin, our Lord permitted him to see a number of souls leaving Purgatory while he was making the Memento for the dead. He was also informed that St. Ildephons, who had a great veneration for that miraculous picture, had also released many souls there. Father Dominic continued in his fervent charity for the Suffering Souls till his death.

511. The Venerable Thomas a Kempis relates of St. Lidwina, who lived at his time and in his country: This holy virgin suffered from an illness of forty-three years' duration. In her ecstacies she was often con-

ducted by her guardian angel into Purgatory, where she saw the souls enduring various torments according to the degree of their guilt. Amongst them she noticed many of her friends. Thereby she was encouraged not only to suffer patiently herself, but to offer up her sufferings and to increase them voluntarily for the sake of the Poor Souls. She continually invoked the mercy of God for them, and often wept so copiously in contemplating their torments that her tears were turned into blood. She released many souls, and was particularly successful in doing so on great feasts.—Another writer mentions that she once declared herself willing, in suffrage for the Holy Souls, to continue in her sufferings to the end of the world if it so pleased God, rather than to enter heaven at once—God Himself having proposed the choice to her. By this heroic offering she released a great number of souls, amongst them those of her parents, and of all her relatives to the ninth degree.

512. Like St. Lidwina most of the friends of the Holy Souls were sorry to leave this earth, because death terminated their acts of charity in behalf of their suffering clients. Hence they offered themselves wholly to God and resigned themselves to His holy will. But charity is inventive; it is not only resigned, but also becomes heroic. This charity reasons as follows: If mortal men willingly suffer the greatest pains and torments to protect their loved ones—mothers for their children, brothers and sisters for one another—why should not a Christian heart, moved by the double love of God and man, do the same? Why should we not suffer for these Holy Souls as we suffer for our loved ones on earth?—Filled with heroic love

of God disinterested souls therefore exclaim, "If I have the happiness of gaining heaven, I know that I shall be one of the least in the mansions of bliss. But in Purgatory there are souls that will be raised above the angels after they have atoned for their sins. For them I will gladly remain in Purgatory, that God's glory may be increased by their praise, and that innumerable other souls may find release through their intercession. No, I do not wish to be freed from Purgatory, if I can thereby secure the release of these souls. If God permits, I cede to them all the intercessions made for me. My torments will be sweet and dear to me because God's glory is increased thereby."

513. St. Paulinus, bishop of Nola, sold himself into slavery to effect the release of a poor widow's son; and he would have suffered a thousand deaths to release one soul from Purgatory. "For love is strong as death.....Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can floods drown it: if a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing." (Cant. VIII. 6. 7.) To heroic charity the merits gained during mortal life are not sufficient to satisfy its desire of helping these poorest of the poor; it extends itself beyond this world; it descends into Purgatory and suffers the punishment incurred, yielding to other suffering souls the atonements made by friends and relatives. Faber writes in his "All for Jesus" (chap. II.): "See how far some have gone, whose praise is in all the churches. Father Ferdinand de Monroy, a most apostolic man, at the hour of death made a writing in donation and transfer to the souls in Purgatory of all the Masses that should be said for him after he was dead, of all the penance offered up for him, and all the indulgences gained for him."

514. Christ our Lord Himself and the saints have given us examples of this heroic love. "Christ came into this world to save sinners." (I Tim. I. 15.) He left His glory, He became so poor that He had not where to lay His head: all for the love of us. "In this we have known the charity of God, because He hath laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (I John III. 16.) In imitation of this example the apostles did the same. They became, as St. Paul says of himself, the servants of all that they might gain all. "I became all things to all men, that I might save all." (I Cor. IX. 22.) This is the character of true charity. "Charity is patient, is kind. Charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked by anger, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." (I Cor. XIII. 4—7.) Charity remembers that "we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of one another." (Rom. XII. 5.) Hence we are not to regard as extraordinary the heroic act of charity for the Suffering Souls.

515. Striving to become more and more like unto their Divine Master the saints continually remembered the souls suffering in Purgatory; for they well knew that they could not better demonstrate their love for Jesus than by effecting a speedy release of His imprisoned spouses. Hence St. Bridget hesitates not to declare, "If by our intercession we release a soul from Purgatory, we perform a work most pleasing to God; for He regards this work as though it had been done to Himself. He will reward us for this service in a

manner most profitable to us."—To render their charity for the Suffering Souls still more conspicuous these generous lovers of their Lord go a step further: they offer to Him even the sacrifice of their own will concerning the selection of the souls to be released. And to make this sacrifice still more acceptable they present it by the hands of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In this they follow the example of the servant of God, Father Oliden, of the Theatine Order. It was He who introduced this practice; and he received the assurance that it was most pleasing to God. These friends of the Holy Souls look up to their Divine Savior and see with what great love He regards His Blessed Mother Mary; they know that the more they honor and love her the more efficient their intercession will be. Hence they prefer Mary's will to their own, prefer it to their love for their friends and relatives; they are content to see Mary's will fulfilled rather than to release their own dear ones. O how pleasing to our Lord is such a love for His Mother! For is it not a most effective demonstration of love for Himself? Is it not a triumph of supernatural over natural charity? Hence this sacrifice is regarded by our Lord with the greatest complacency, as He once declared to St. Bridget, "My Mother is the Mistress of My Kingdom. She admits to it whomsoever she pleases, and what she does is well done."

516. Convinced of this truth Pope Benedict VIII. explained this practice to the people in sixty public addresses. And not content with having explained it to others, he himself publicly from the pulpit professed this heroic act.—The same was done, at the instance of the Blessed Virgin herself, by the

Venerable Jesuit, Father John Ximenes; also by a great many other holy and learned persons—for instance St. Gertrude, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Theresa, St. Bridget, St. Lidwina, Venerable Eusebius Nieremberg, S. J., Catherine Emmerich, etc., etc. Even religious communities pledged themselves and do pledge themselves to-day to practice this heroic act of charity. Prominent among these is the "Congregation of Helpers of the Holy Souls," a female community devoted to the care of poor sick, to whom they minister day and night. They add to the three usual religious vows a fourth, by which they cede all the fruits of their prayers and good works, and of those performed for them after death, to the Suffering Souls.

But not only religious make this act; thousands and thousands of devout souls in the world do the same. They serve God and their neighbor in ardent charity. They make use of the golden treasury of good works to apply the merits of the Most Precious Blood to the Suffering Souls, imploring our Savior to refresh them in their torments.—Christian soul, can you remain an idle spectator where such heroic deeds are performed? Are you content with sterile admiration of their charity? Oh, no! Let it not be thus! Do no longer delay to make this heroic act. Fall on your knees at once, and say with all your heart:

O Heavenly Father! In union with the merits of Jesus and Mary I offer to Thee for the Suffering Souls in Purgatory all the satisfactory works of my whole life, as also those works that will be offered for me after my death. I deliver these works into the most pure hands of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, that she may distribute them amongst those souls whom she in

her wisdom and maternal love desires to release first from Purgatory. Graciously accept, O Lord, this offering, and in return let me daily increase in Thy grace! Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

§ 64. Motives for Making the Heroic Act of Charity.

517. Christian soul! Considering the extent of this offering you are perhaps in doubt as to the advisability of thus renouncing even the little good that you can call your own. If you were a St. Aloysius, a St. Stanislas Kostka, a St. Theresa, you would feel more encouraged to perform this act of charity; but then—! To appear before the all-searching eye of God to receive from Him the sentence of judgment that is to decide our eternal destiny is an event of so serious import that language has no adequate expression for it. And there we are to appear without fruits!—O terrible thought! "We must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ," says St. Paul, "that every one may receive . . . according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil." (II Cor. v. 10.) How well it will be for us then, if we have always lived in the fear of our Judge, if we have sent before us good works, and have gained friends to receive us in the eternal mansions.—Terrible judgment, how it causes us to tremble!—We acknowledge our deficiency in merit; we discern that we have done scarcely anything for God and for eternity! And this being the case, we are invited to give up that little to others?—"Charity begins at home."

518. The soul of a Christian who has yielded all the atoning merit of his good works to the Suffering

Souls is about to appear before its Judge, before Him who judges all in rigorous justice. Soon the records will be searched. Suppose this Christian's life has been a sinful one. His conscience, even now, begins its incriminations: "Where is your faith and where are your works? Have they always corresponded?—What did you believe? You believed that everything in the world is vain and unworthy of your attention; that only such things as are worthy of God and profitable for eternity are deserving of regard. This was your faith: and yet you lived for the world. You devoted yourself to things temporal; you were poor in heavenly treasures, and yet your sole aim was to amass earthly wealth, to surpass others, to make your fortune.—These are your works.—You believed it to be your first and most important duty to love God above all things and with your whole heart, and to love everything else only in and for God: and yet you loved everything except God. You had to force yourself to think of Him. But to offend Him cost you no effort. What a discrepancy between your faith and your works!"—Oh, sad reflections of a dying man who abandoned himself to his evil inclinations!

519. But the light of faith illuminates the darkness of despair for the dying Christian.—True, he has sinned often; but his confessions were always contrite and sincere and so frequent, his penance so well-meant, that he may confidently hope to have cleansed his soul in the Most Precious Blood of the Son of God. Wherever he found himself deficient—in the observance of the commandments, in his duties and obligations—all this he repaired to the full extent of his ability. Now God's minister approaches to bring

him the consolations of religion. He receives Extreme Unction. "By this holy unction," says the priest, "and by His benign mercy, may God forgive thee what thou hast sinned with thy senses." He is now wholly cleansed, and peacefully he expects the summons of the Lord.—But still a doubt disquiets him. True, his sins are forgiven; heaven will be his reward after atoning in Purgatory. When, oh, when will he get to heaven? He gave all his good works to the Suffering Souls by the heroic act of charity. He was charitable towards others, but forgot himself! He is harassed with doubt and inclines to the belief that his Purgatory will be of long duration.—And now death claims him.

520. Scarcely has he expired, when he hears the dreadful words of Christ, "With what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." (Matth. VII. 2.) And solemn silence follows these words—when, behold, the Judge appears bearing the imprint of His five wounds. He addresses the soul, "Welcome, my beloved brother! Thou hast devoted all thy works and prayers to the release of the souls suffering in Purgatory. Thy charity was great; it impelled thee to forget thyself in the desire to help them. Receive now for thyself what thou didst so ardently implore for others—the full remission of thy temporal punishment and immediate admission to heaven."

521. To St. Gertrude, who had made this heroic act of charity, and who was therefore greatly in fear of Purgatory, our Lord appeared and said, "That thou mayest know how pleasing to Me was thy charity towards the Suffering Souls, I remit to thee the entire

punishment that had been decreed for thee. And having promised a hundred-fold, I will greatly increase thy glory in heaven."—To St. Bridget also, who was troubled by the same thought, He appeared, saying, "My daughter! that thou mayest know how pleasing thy charity was to Me, I remit to thee all the punishment which thou otherwise shouldst have had to suffer in Purgatory. And as I have promised to reward a hundred-fold all who renounce their own for love of Me, I will moreover increase thy reward above thy merits and add to thy glory in heaven. Besides I will permit all the souls whom thou hast released to meet thee at thy death, and to conduct thy soul triumphantly to heaven."

522. Even supposing that a soul which has exercised this charitable act were sentenced to Purgatory after death because of certain faults or of punishment incurred, it would nevertheless be an object of special solicitude on the part of our Savior. Its punishment would be of short duration, for we can not doubt that God's wisdom and power have many means of coming to the aid of such a soul. We must remember in this connection that God has reserved to Himself the distribution of the fruits of intercession, of Masses and indulgences applied for the Suffering Souls. When applying these suffrages God will surely regard those with particular favor who have given all their own merits for the relief of the Suffering Souls; and so He will reward their charity a hundred-fold. We must remember that prayers for the faithful departed in general are said often and everywhere; that prayers, Masses and indulgences are offered for many who were admitted to heaven long ago; that the millions who

are making the heroic act of charity, daily offer to God countless works of atonement. Verily, by relying on the mercy of God we consult our own interest better than by confiding in our personal merits.

523. It is impossible to describe the joy experienced by the departed soul of this Christian on finding that its atoning merits are not only not lost, but that they were rendered a hundred-fold more durable by this heroic act of charity. Not only does the Divine Judge remit to him all punishment, but in return for even the most insignificant work for the Suffering Souls his glory in heaven has been increased. More and more is the soul convinced of the great value God attaches to this act of charity for the Suffering Souls. St. Theresa once remarked, after God had permitted her to glance at the glory of heaven, that she would gladly suffer every torment to the end of the world in order to have her reward in heaven increased even by the smallest good work—by the devout reciting of one "Our Father", or by an ejaculation for the Suffering Souls. She well knew that one degree of heavenly glory is more valuable than all the pleasures of the world.—"One degree of heavenly glory," observes a master of spiritual life, "what does it mean? It means, to enjoy the beatific vision of God in a greater measure, to be more intimately united with God, to enjoy a greater reward—and all this forever!"

524. Concerning this point Faber observes in his book "All for Jesus," (chap. II. § 5.,) where he treats of the cession of indulgences in favor of the Suffering Souls: "The first fruit is the great increase of our merits by this; for, of the three things which the good works of the just include, merit, impetration and satis-

faction, the greatest of all is merit; for by it we become more acceptible to God, and more His friends, receiving greater grace, and so acquiring a new title to greater glory. Doubtless, then, if a man could turn all the satisfaction of his good works into so much fresh merit, over and above the merit there was there before, he would be a gainer by it, and for this reason: —the glory of the Blessed is without comparison a greater good than the pains of Purgatory are an evil; and so the right to greater glory is a better thing than the right to less pain. He, then, who offers the satisfaction of his good works and his indulgences for the souls in Purgatory, does just this:—he converts his satisfaction into merit. In this charity is an heroic act of great virtue, by which he will acquire eternal life by means of that satisfaction turned into merits which is no help at all as simple satisfaction toward eternal life. As satisfaction, it would not have helped him one iota to that, but he makes it do so by turning it into merit, and at the same time helping others. Now this deserves reflection; for, besides the fact that glory is a greater good than Purgatory is an evil, we must remember that the increase of glory is a thing which is eternal, whereas the lightening of Purgatory is only temporal, for Purgatory itself is merely temporal; so that the difference between the increase of glory and the lightening of Purgatory is as good as infinite. And yet to enjoy eternal good, even in the very lowest degree, would be cheaply purchased by the endurance of the greatest temporal evils. We must add to this, that we ought in all things to do that which is most pleasing in the sight of God, not seeking our own interest and convenience, but His greater

good pleasure. To please God is a better thing than to avoid suffering; yet a man who keeps his satisfaction and indulgences to himself, does so from a desire of avoiding suffering; whereas he who offers them all for the souls in Purgatory thereby makes himself dearer to God, by a refinement of love in this heroic exercise of mercy and charity, which he was not bound to, but does out of the sweet freedom of his own will."

525. The soul of this Christian, then, perceives more and more clearly what inexhaustible blessings it owes to this heroic act of charity. It becomes aware that it possessed in it a most valuable means for the attainment of perfection. During his life on earth he took great pains to avoid mortal sin entirely, and venial sin as much as possible; for the latter weakens charity and makes good works for the Suffering Souls less efficient. The more he considered the benefits of this act, the more he prayed and labored; for whosoever makes this act finds it an incentive to greater zeal in prayer and in the performance of good works of all kinds. By this means he attained for his soul a greater degree of glory. Now he only regrets that he did not know the value of this exercise better: how much greater zeal he would have exhibited!—Oh, that we would earnestly reflect on this, how differently we would make use of our precious time! — How we would pray, fast and give alms! How greatly we would prize Holy Mass, confession and communion! —If we did but reflect on this truth, we could not be so slothful. "With desolation is all the land made desolate: because there is none that considereth in his heart." (Jerem. XII. 11.)

526. Only now does this soul receive a true conception of that great power at the throne of God, the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, by which it was protected and assisted in its last moments on earth.—It is related in the life of St. Bridget that she most fervently invoked the assistance of the Blessed Virgin for her dying son. From a revelation she learned that before his death, through Mary's intercession, he had been filled with a love of God so ardent that his soul went straight to heaven; also, that the Blessed Virgin had hastened his death, to rescue him from the attacks with which satan had intended to assault him in his last moments.—Now this Blessed Mother hastens to receive the soul with outstretched arms, as St. Jerome declares: "Mary does not only assist her devout clients at the moment of death, but she also meets them on their way to heaven, to encourage them."—St. Vincent Ferrerius also says, "The Blessed Virgin receives the souls of the dying."

527. Mary thus addresses the soul of her client: "Come, my servant! Thou hast so often invoked me to aid the most forsaken souls in Purgatory; thy whole life was devoted to this purpose. I accepted thy suffrages and united them with my own intercession; and we were both heard. And because thou didst leave to me the choice of the souls to be released, I took thee under my protection and shielded thee from divine justice. By my intercession thou wast declared free from all punishment as a reward for thy confiding trust in the merciful Mother of the just Judge. Come, my servant, receive thy heavenly robe and take possession of the eternal mansions of my Son, where I reign as Queen. As a heroic child of thy heavenly

Mother thy place shall be at my side."—Only now does he receive full knowledge of Mary's clemency and mercy. He never expected such a reward for services so insignificant. Now he comprehends what St. Bonaventure declares: "Oh, happy those who obtain Mary's favor; the Blessed in heaven already regard them as their associates. For he that is known to be a client of Mary is inscribed in the book of life."

528. The soul of this Christian, after being clothed with the robes of immortal glory, remembers that a dear friend of his is still suffering in Purgatory; and he almost regrets that he did not give everything to that soul for the purpose of releasing it from its torments. But Mary remarks, "O my son, do not grieve! I know very well thy desire; but I also know thy duty towards thy relatives and friends, imposed on thee by my Divine Son. My Son's will is also mine. As thou didst place thy atonements into my hands, I was careful to serve thee well. I had regard for thy relatives, friends and benefactors in the order in which thou wast beholden to them before God. Thou couldst never have made a just distribution. How soon didst thou cease praying for thy deceased Father confessor, because thou thoughtst him no longer in need of intercession. The same was the case with regard to thy father, mother, etc. Thou didst think only of thy friend; but in order not to act unjustly and partially, thou didst leave the distribution of thy atonements to me. And therein thou hast acted wisely; and thou hast doubled the atoning value of thy works. Behold, all those whom thou hast aided shall come with their guardian angels and holy patrons to greet thee."

529. Scarcely has Mary ceased speaking, when the friends and relatives—and they seem to be thousands in number—appear in the company of their guardian angels and patron saints, for the purpose of conducting the soul to its place in heaven.—Can it therefore be contrary to the love we owe to ourselves to make the heroic act of charity? Would it not rather be against this love not to make it? To cede all our works of atonement and all our indulgences to the souls in Purgatory is therefore a devotion that perfectly and most beautifully accords with the honor of God, with the interests of Jesus, and with the love of ourselves; a devotion that embraces the Church triumphant, militant and suffering. What a joy for the soul of this heroic Christian to see the great number of heavenly friends gained by this act of charity! Experience now proves that the performing of this act has been to his own interest.

530. Among the souls coming to meet him are those of his parents. His guardian angel now reminds him that he had ceased praying for them to soon; but that in virtue of the heroic act of charity this deficiency was more than made good again. Parents and child now embrace each other; they thank God for His great clemency and mercy towards them: "Praise, thanks and glory for evermore to the Most Holy Trinity; to the Holy Family, Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Thanks also, and God's grace and blessing to those who make this heroic act of charity, and thereby offer their meritorious works for the greater glory of God." All the souls, together with their angels and patrons, join with their benefactor in this act of homage; and as a token of gratitude for his

generosity every soul presents to him a gift, after which they lead him to the place prepared for him in heaven. Arrived there, he now comprehends very clearly how instead of losing he gained immensely by the heroic act of charity; for by renouncing his atoning merits he gained the special love of the Most Holy Trinity, of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of all the saints; and now he also begins to experience the fulfilment of the words of Christ, "Good measure and pressed down, and shaken together and running over they shall give unto your bosom." (Luke VI. 38.) His gratitude to God is boundless; and in his gratitude he immediately addresses to God a petition—he implores mercy for the Suffering Souls. The dawn of a blissful eternity has arrived for this Christian: he enjoys the beatific vision of God; but he also sees the torments of the souls in Purgatory, sees their tears and hears their sighs. He sees also the doings of men on earth. And the more he contemplates the infinite greatness of God, the better he understands the cause of that yearning with which the Holy Souls are filled; the more he is convinced of the neglect shown towards them on earth. A holy sorrow pervades him who had been so charitable in mortal life; his desire to help the Suffering Souls draws him, together with all the saints and heavenly spirits, to the throne of the Just Judge, there to offer his most fervent intercession. "O God of mercy," thus he prays, "it was Thy holy will to call me to Thy heavenly mansions. If Thou hadst willed, or at least hadst given me the choice, to suffer for Thy loving spouses in Purgatory, I should gladly have led the most abject and miserable life. Willingly would I descend into Purgatory even now

to suffer there to the end of the world. But as Thou hast ordained otherwise, I adore and praise Thy holy will. But deign, O most benign God, to move the hearts of the faithful on earth to this work of charity. Raise up loving hearts, hearts ready to follow the example of Thy disinterested love! Move to charity many self-sacrificing hearts, that they may place at Thy disposal the entire treasury of their atoning merits in favor of the Suffering Souls in Purgatory! There are many zealous Christians on earth. Inspire some of them with holy ardor that they may make known to the world the salutary effects of the heroic act of charity for the Suffering Souls!"—And may you, good reader, so please God, belong to the number of those who are thus aroused!

§ 65. Indulgences and Privileges of the Heroic Act of Charity.

531. The Heroic Act of Charity for the Suffering Souls, as was remarked before, consists in the offering up to God, by the hands of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of all the meritorious acts of our whole life, together with the works of atonement offered up for us after our death, for the relief and ransom of the souls in Purgatory. This pious practice owes its origin to a religious of the Theatine Order, Father Caspar Oliden. He devoted his life to its propagation; and on the 23d of August, 1728, he received for it the formal approval of Pope Benedict XIII. Later it was confirmed by Pius VI., 1788, and by Pius IX., 1852 and 1854.

532. The last decree of approval, issued by the S. Congregation of Indulgences on the 20th of No-

vember, 1854, contains also a summary of the indulgences granted to this Act; and this is as follows:

"Whereas 'it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from sins,' the apostolic charity of the Roman Pontiffs never ceased to apply means, whereby the children of the Church militant might be enkindled with greater zeal for the benefit of the dead; for which purpose they have taken indulgences almost without number from the treasury of the Church, indulgences that are made applicable to the souls suffering in the expiatory flames of Purgatory, and which were granted for the recitation of certain prayers, and for the performance of certain good works, in order that the souls for which they are applied may be released more speedily from their punishment, and may the sooner join the Blessed in the city of God. To aid these souls more effectively, Father Caspar Oliden, Priest of the Theatine Order, at the time of our Predecessor Benedict XIII., of happy memory, introduced, or at least propagated a pious practice, by which the faithful who pledged themselves to it, dedicate and cede to the souls of the faithful departed, in special charity, all the good works performed by themselves during their whole life-time, and all those performed for them after their death. The aforesaid Pontiff, Benedict XIII., granted to all who pledged themselves to this work, special indulgences, which were later confirmed at the instance of the above mentioned Theatines, by authority of Pope Pius VI., on the 12th of December, 1788, and which our Most Holy Father, Pius IX., on the 30th of September, 1852, not only again confirmed, at the instance of many priests, but also deigned to specify as follows:

1) The priests who make this votive pledge or promise, enjoy the privilege of the altar on all days of the year.

2) The faithful who do the same may gain a plenary indulgence applicable to the souls in Purgatory, *a*) on every day they receive holy communion; *b*) on every Monday of the year, if they assist at Mass for the relief of the Suffering Souls, provided that in both cases they visit a church or public oratory, and there pray for some time for the intention of the Holy Father.

(N.B. 1. It is sufficient to say for instance five Our Fathers and Hail Marys.—N.B. 2. Priests gain the indulgence only *a*) when they receive the communion *more laicorum; b*) when they assist at Mass.)

3) In like manner the faithful may apply to the Suffering Souls each and every indulgence hitherto granted, or to be granted in future.

4) That the Suffering Souls may receive effective relief, this indult is to be considered as extended to all the faithful in the whole world, that have made this votive promise or pledge.

Moreover, His Holiness, taking into consideration the condition of children who have not yet been admitted to their first communion, of the sick, the aged, prisoners, farmers and other faithful who are prevented from approaching the holy table, or of assisting at Mass on Mondays, ordained in parental solicitude for all Christians thus legitimately impeded, as follows:

a) That the Holy Mass at which they are bound by precept of the Church to assist on Sundays, shall suffice to gain the indulgence for the Mondays.

b) At the same time His Holiness permitted the Ordinaries of dioceses to appoint from among approved confessors those whom they delegate to change into other pious works, if they deem proper, the obligation of receiving communion for all those who are not yet admitted to it, or who are legitimately impeded from receiving it.

Given at Rome, November 20th, 1854.

CARDINAL ASQUINI, Prefect.

533. Later, when serious doubts arose concerning the practice and the essential conditions of the indulgences and privileges, the S. Congregation of Indulgences, on the 18th of December, 1885, issued a decree which was approved by Pope Leo XIII. on the following day. Said decree reads as follows:

1) To the works of atonement offered for the relief of the Suffering Souls by the heroic act of charity must also be reckoned the indulgences declared by the Popes as applicable to the Suffering Souls.

2) Those who reserve for themselves the indulgences granted for the living do not satisfy the obligation entered into by this act. These indulgences too must be applied to the faithful departed in conformity with the indult.

3) It is not an essential condition, but solely a pious practice, to place the good works and indulgences at the disposal of the Blessed Virgin Mary in favor of the Suffering Souls.

4) Hence the plenary indulgences granted for holy communion and for assisting at Mass on Mondays must not necessarily be offered to the Blessed Virgin for those souls whom she desires to release in particular, but they can be applied at will to any soul.

5) The plenary indulgences granted to priests in virtue of the heroic act of charity and in consequence of the privilege of the altar must be applied to the soul for whom the Mass is celebrated; for the privilege is granted in this sense. (*Act. S. Sedis*, XVIII, 3317.

534. Christian soul! You have now been fully instructed concerning the heroic act of charity, this most beautiful offering of Christian charity for the Suffering Souls, this crown of all devotions for their relief and ransom. Remember well: to gain all the above mentioned indulgences and privileges, it is sufficient to make the act merely by an interior expression of the will. Although it is not necessary to renew the act in order to gain the indulgences (provided we have not revoked the act, in which case the renewal of it would be necessary), yet it is most commendable to do so often, either by a certain formula of prayer, or at least when making the daily good intention.—As was explained before, we cede by this act only that fruit of our good works, which is our particular and personal gain, so that priests are not prevented thereby from celebrating Mass for the intention for which they have accepted a stipend. Nor does this act prevent us from praying for ourselves, our parents, etc., or from performing our usual pious exercises; for only the atoning value of all these good works is ceded in favor of the Suffering Souls.

535. You have learned from the contents of these treatises the terrible torments of the Suffering Souls, their ardent yearning to be united with their God and Savior, comparable to a consuming thirst which they are unable to quench. It is in your power, Christian soul, by the heroic act of charity not only to refresh

them, but to pour out the full stream of the Most Precious Blood of our Redeemer on the flames in which they are suffering, and thereby to bring ineffable relief to these poor victims of Divine Justice. Remember: all your prayers and sufferings, every good action you perform is for their relief. If you do penance, you do it for them; if you weep, your tears are for their consolation, a refreshing dew for them in the expiating flames; your compassion comforts them. Remember the indulgences: by the heroic act all the indulgences ever granted and to be granted by the Church are applicable to the Suffering Souls. Otherwise only those specially designated may be applied to them.—Considering all this, will you refuse to join with the millions of Christians who belong to this army of intercessors for the Holy Souls?—Renew therefore this salutary act, devoutly saying:

O Heavenly Father! In union with the merits of Jesus and Mary I offer to Thee for the Suffering Souls in Purgatory all the satisfactory works of my whole life, as also those works that will be offered for me after my death. I deliver these works into the most pure hands of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, that she may distribute them amongst those souls whom she in her wisdom and maternal love desires to release first from Purgatory. Graciously accept, O Lord, this offering, and in return let me daily increase in Thy grace! Through Christ our Lord. Amen!

CHAPTER VII.

Apparitions of a Suffering Soul in 1870.

536. In conclusion of these treatises on Purgatory we append the following description of the appartions of a soul from Purgatory, which occurred in the year 1870, and were published first in 1872 by the Rev. G. M. Curique, priest of the diocese of Metz, with the approbation of his Ordinary. The authenticity of these apparitions is established beyond doubt, and the account thereof may serve to confirm many of the theories advanced in this book.

Sister Mary Seraphine, member of a religious community in Malines, Belgium, was suddenly attacked, in 1870, by a great spiritual depression. She was at a loss to what cause to ascribe this melancholy, which with her was quite a new experience; and she did her utmost to overcome it. Formerly of a social, cheerful disposition, she had become silent and morose; and despite all her efforts she could not shake off the burden that oppressed her mind. It seemed to her that she was continually haunted by some invisible shadow which followed her everywhere, to the choir, refectory, etc., never permitting her to rest by day or night. She often felt this invisible power pulling at her scapular—a burden "like a leaden weight," she remarked, was pressing her right shoulder. She acquainted her Superioress and the mistress of novices

with all these occurrences. Finally, on the 29th of July a letter arrived from France informing her that on the 17th her father had died. This explained all.

537. Thenceforth, while the Sister's depression continued, she often heard moanings and exclamations like those by which her father had been wont to relieve himself when suffering. She also continually heard a voice saying distinctly, "Dear daughter, have mercy on me, have mercy on me!" On the 4th of October her pains were increased; she now had to suffer also from an excruciating headache. On the evening of the 14th, when the Sister had retired to bed in the dormitory of the novitiate, and was just about to fall asleep, she suddenly saw her father between the wall and the bed. He looked very sorrowful and was enveloped in flames. She was so affected at the sight that she called loudly for help. It seemed to her that the flames were scorching her, too.

538. Next evening, on the 15th, and at the same hour, the Sister was kneeling at her bed-side saying the *Salve Regina* before retiring, when she again saw her father in the same place and condition. From that time on till his deliverance she saw him every evening. On this second occasion she thought that perhaps her father was suffering for some act of injustice committed in business. But answering her unexpressed thought, he said, "No, I am not guilty of any injustice; I suffer for my continual impatience, and for other faults which I cannot mention."

She then inquired whether he had received no relief from the many Masses that his family had ordered to be celebrated for him. "O yes," he replied; "my soul is soothed every morning by a refreshing dew.

But that is not sufficient. I am in need of the Stations of the Cross."

When the Sister was asked what she felt during the apparitions, she replied, "I feel as if I heard a certain rustling near me, and then I suddenly see my father. His aspect facinates me, so that I forget where I am. I see and hear only him."

The mistress of novices often found her kneeling at her bed-side, with hands folded and eyes open, and so oblivious of all around her, that nothing could engage her attention.

539. On the 16th of October the soul appeared again. The Sister had been instructed to say, "All good spirits praise the Lord!" As she received no reply she thought it was an evil spirit. But reading her thoughts, her father replied, "No, no. I am not a devil!"—She answered, "Then say with me, 'Praise be to Jesus Christ and Mary!'" He repeated this ejaculation twice, and then added the words of the Gospel of St. John, "*Et Verbum caro factum est!* And the Word was made flesh." Then he continued, "Alas, alas, I am over six years in Purgatory, and you have no compassion for me!" "Poor father," the Sister replied, "how can you speak thus, when it is scarcely three months since you died?"—"Oh, you do not know what eternity is! The soul, once having seen God, is consumed with an ardent desire of remaining in His presence. I am sentenced to Purgatory for six months; but if your community would pray perseveringly for me, my punishment would be reduced by one half. God has permitted me to implore you continually for my release.—How senseless I was to have opposed your vocation. Now I am relieved only in

your presence. The rest of my children think I am in heaven, and scarcely one of them now and then says a *De profundis* for me. Poor Joanna (an old servant) alone continues to pray for me and thereby helps me."

This was really so. His children thought he was in heaven, and expressed themselves thus in a letter to the Sister: "Father died like a saint, and is now in heaven."—How often we are in a like delusion concerning the fate of our dear ones!

"Poor father," the Sister replied, "I am entirely at your service. You may trouble me at will, if only the rest of the community are not disturbed. I will have many prayers said for you. Tell me what you particularly desire." He replied, "I wish that ten Masses be celebrated, and that the Stations of the Cross be visited for me often." The Sister asked him whether her mother was still in Purgatory. "No; on entering eternity I was informed that she went straight to heaven after her death. You sacrificed your health by nursing her in her last illness, and now I come to trouble you for my deliverance."

540. On the 17th her father appeared to her in great sorrow, but without flames, and complained that he had been less refreshed on the previous day. "Dear father, do you not know that the Sisters cannot pray all day? According to our rule we must devote part of our time to our various tasks and labors."—"I do not expect that they pray continually, but they might direct their intentions to my release. Every work, even the least, performed in the state of grace and offered to God, is meritorious and of atoning value, and serves to lessen our punishment. If the Sisters

do not come to my aid, I shall continue to trouble you, for the Lord has given me permission. My dear daughter, remember the sacrifice you made on the day of your investment; now you must bear the consequences. Behold the fiery cistern in which I am confined. There are several hundreds of us in it.—Oh, if people would but know what Purgatory is! They would then suffer everything in order to escape it and to release the Poor Souls confined in it. You must become a holy religious; you must faithfully observe all the rules, even those that may seem to be immaterial. The Purgatory of religious is terrible."

The Sister really saw a fiery cistern from which dense clouds of smoke arose. She said, "The impression it made on me is indelibly inscribed on my memory."—Her father showed her his parched tongue, saying, "I thirst! I thirst!"

541. The next time he said, "It is long since I came to you."—"Poor father," she replied, "you were here last evening."—"If I shall have to remain in Purgatory three months more it will seem an eternity. At first I was sentenced to Purgatory for many years; and I owe it to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin that my time was reduced to a few months."

"This grace to come and ask me for aid," the Sister explained to the community, "was granted to my father in reward for his good works. Moreover he was a devout client of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in whose honor he received the sacraments on all her feasts. He was also very charitable; he spared no trouble when there was question of assisting the unfortunate. He even begged from door to door to assist in establishing a home for the Little Sisters of the Poor.

542. Sometimes the Sister asked her father questions which he was not permitted to answer. One evening she gave him her hand and a book, the "Imitation of Christ," saying, "You see me so perplexed, dear father, because I am always afraid of delusion, thinking these apparitions every evening might be productions of the imagination. Therefore leave the imprint of your hand on mine or on this book, so that I may know that it is really you whom I see."—"No," he replied, "I will not do it. The pain you feel is according to the will of God, and your uncertainty is to hasten my deliverance."

Later he nevertheless twice touched her, once on the right shoulder, and the next time over her heart, causing intense pain. But strange to say, though no indication appeared on her habit, her skin on both places had a black spot, as she modestly informed her confessor.

543. To her great consolation the Sister received full confirmation of the reality of these apparitions in the following manner: One evening a religious of the community suffered terribly from toothache, and Sister Seraphine suggested to her to pray for her father and in return to ask him to obtain relief for her. Scarcely had the Sister done so, when her pain vanished and she slept peacefully.

544. On the 30th of October, by command of her confessor, she asked her father what prayers would be most appropriate to be said on All Souls' day. He replied, "Alas, the world does not believe that the fire of Purgatory is similar to that of hell. If a person could but once visit Purgatory, he would nevermore commit the least sin, so rigorously are the souls pun-

ished." Another time she asked him if he had been released from the cistern, as she had not seen him in it the last three days. "Oh, no," he answered; "see the proof!" And immediately she beheld the cistern, dense clouds of smoke and flames of fire ascending from it. And sorrowfully the poor man exclaimed, "To-day we all were greatly relieved, and a great number of souls was admitted to heaven."

545. About the same time he appeared to another Sister, who was greatly troubled because her father had died without the sacraments after long neglecting his religious duties. He said to her, "Your father is saved; but he is sentenced to suffer in Purgatory for twenty years; for your consolation, however, I am permitted to inform you, that your sister N. was released from the flames a short time ago, and is now in heaven." The girl referred to had died sixteen years before, when she was only eight years old; and yet she had to suffer so long in Purgatory. Concerning the salvation of her father, the Sister ascribed it rightly to his great charity towards the poor to whom he had always been most liberal, and to the persevering prayer of his wife and children.

Sister Seraphine asked her father to appear again to this Sister, and to inform her concerning the state of her father; but he gave no answer. Nevertheless the Sister soon received full knowledge of it in some other way.

546. Sister Seraphine also questioned her father concerning other souls. For instance she asked him one day about the state of a Sister to whom she had been greatly attached. "She is in heaven already for some time," he replied. Then she inquired whether

any Sisters of her community were at present in Purgatory; but he confessed that he was not permitted to answer.—"Do the souls in Purgatory know who prays for them, and are they permitted to pray for the faithful on earth?" He answered in the affirmative. "Do the souls also suffer for.....?" and she mentioned some faults of daily occurrence. "Yes," he replied, "they are punished for them." He then related to her that on leaving this world he had seen the infinite majesty of God, the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and that this vision had left in him a continually increasing and most ardent yearning to see them again. He also told her that St. Joseph was present at his judgment, and that he had since repeatedly visited Purgatory in company with the Blessed Virgin to console him; also, that he often saw his guardian angel who came to comfort him.

547. On the 23d of November the Sister saw her father as usual; but this time he seemed closer to her, and her own suffering was thereby greatly increased. She felt as if she were all on fire. He informed her that if the community persevered in prayer as hitherto, he would be released during the Christmas holydays.—We must here observe that he was aware of the most secret suffrages offered for the Suffering Souls, and immediately felt their beneficial effect. For example he saw all the pious exercises one of the Sisters had performed for him during her retreat; and he declared that she had aided him greatly by her zeal and heroic charity.

Always obeying the directions of her confessor and of her Superioress, Sister Seraphine asked her father whether it was true that the torments of Purgatory

surpassed in their intensity the sufferings of the martyrs. "It is but too true," was his reply. Then she inquired whether all members of the Confraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel that wore the scapular are released from Purgatory on the first Saturday after their death. "Yes," he replied, "if they have faithfully fulfilled all the conditions." To the question, "Is it true that some souls must remain in Purgatory for fifty years?" he answered, "Yes; and there are souls that are sentenced to atone in it till the end of the world. These souls are the ones most tormented and the most forsaken."

548. On the 30th of November he said to his daughter, "It seems an eternity to me since I arrived in Purgatory. At present my greatest torment is the intense longing to behold God and to enjoy His possession. I feel continually elevated towards Him and am at the same time repulsed and cast into the abyss. Sometimes I am on the edge of the cistern seemingly about to be released from it, when I immediately feel divine justice detaining me because I have not sufficiently atoned."

For two weeks the Sister had not seen the cistern. She now implored her father again, as he had done repeatedly before, to obtain for her the grace of perseverance amid so many interior and external sufferings. "I have already prayed for you," he replied, "and I shall continue to pray for you, my dear daughter. But you will have to suffer still more before I am released."

549. On the 3d of December she saw him again. Still sorrowful, he nevertheless appeared greatly relieved. He described to her the intense love of God

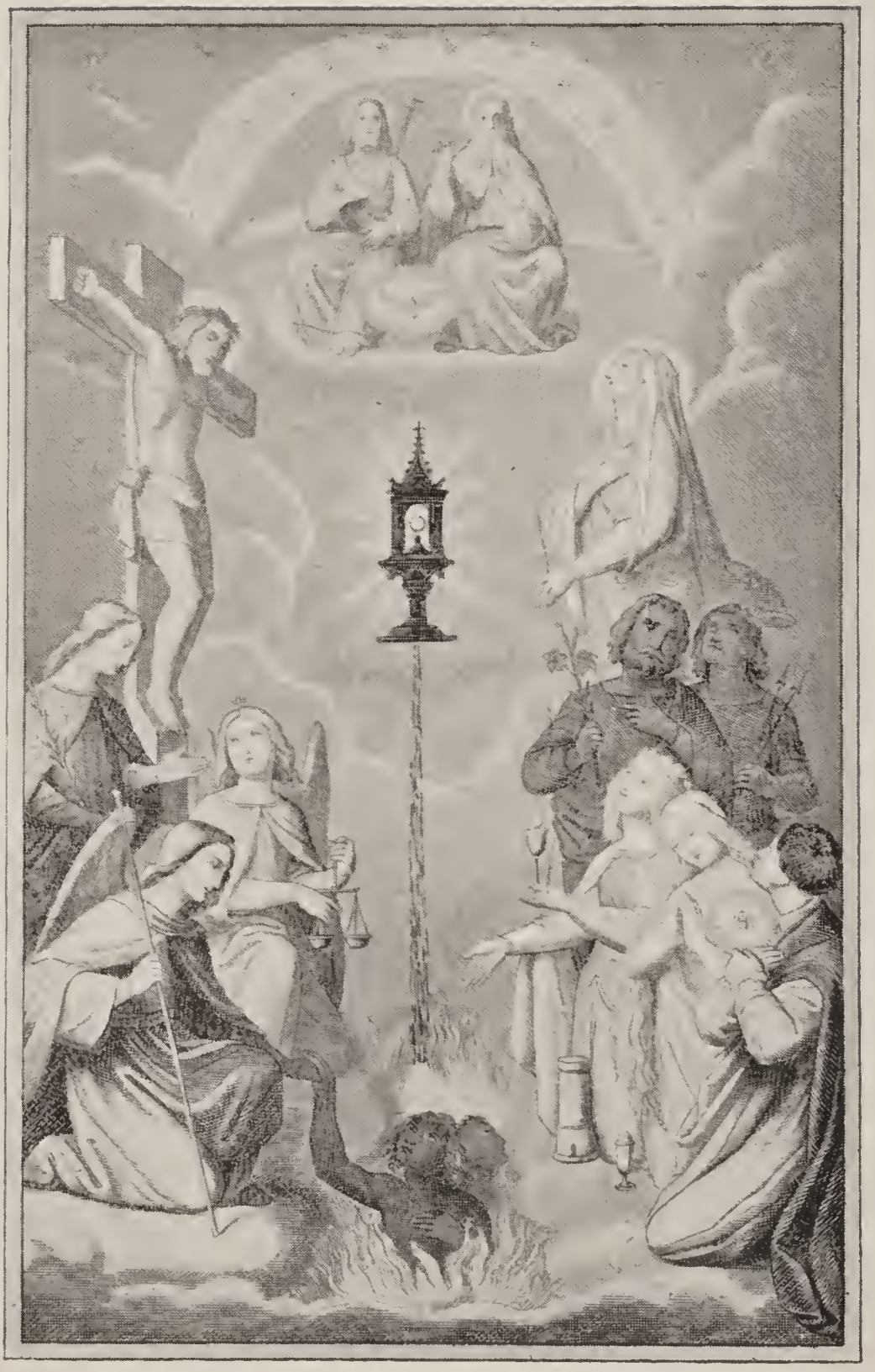
that he felt and the increasing desire of beholding Him. Some time before she had asked him to repeat to her some of the acts of love which the souls in Purgatory made. He had not complied with her request then, but now he said, "I continually make these three acts of love: "O my God, grant me the love with which the Seraphim are enflamed! O my God, grant me still more: grant me the love which inflames the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary! O my God, why can I not love Thee as Thou lovest Thyself?" Then he assured her that he implored for her the love of the Seraphim, adding, "Dear daughter, I am permitted to inform you, that though you are very weak—you will nevertheless have to suffer great pain between now and Christmas, on which day I shall be released." — "And then, dear father, what then? Shall I regain my strength, so as to be able to serve God according to our holy rule?"—"That is a mystery not revealed by God," he replied.

550. Thenceforth, from the 3d of December till the evening of the 12th, the apparitions ceased. On the 12th and the two following evenings he appeared again, brighter every time. From the 14th to the 25th he came no more. Meanwhile the good Sister suffered so intensely that she was scarcely able to visit the chapel. Nevertheless on Christmas night she succeeded in her effort to assist at the Midnight Mass, which she ascribed to the assistance obtained for her by her father, from whom she expected to receive the announcement of his deliverance on that blessed night. And so it happened. Between the first and second elevation of the sacred species, he appeared to her in supernal splendor and said, "My punishment is ended.

I come to thank you and your community for all the prayers said for me. Henceforth I shall pray for you all."

On her return to her room he appeared to her again for the last time to convince her of his release; and again he thanked her. She implored him to obtain for her sufficient strength and health to observe the rule. "I will ask for you perfect resignation to the will of God, and the grace of entering heaven without having to suffer Purgatory." Then he vanished to appear no more. During this last apparition he was so resplendent that her eyes could scarcely bear the dazzling light. Her joy and happiness were now supreme. She felt an ineffable peace of soul, and she was glad to have the assurance that she had not been the victim of an illusion.

551. Thenceforth Sister Seraphine was affected with an illness scarcely known to our age—with homesickness for heaven. Her father's yearning desire for the possession of God seemed to have been bequeathed to her. She became a victim of consumption; and after six months of intense suffering, borne with a martyr's fortitude, her pure soul was called to its eternal reward. She died on Friday, June 23d, the octave of the feast of the Sacred Heart, at the early age of twenty-eight.



"The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."
1. JOHN, I., 7.

APPENDIX I.

The Archconfraternity

OF THE

Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ,

FOR THE

RELIEF AND RANSOM

OF THE

Suffering Souls in Purgatory.

CANONICALLY ESTABLISHED IN THE

CHAPEL OF ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE,

COLLEGEVILLE, IND.

(517)

I. The Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood.

1. By the French revolution and the subsequent wars of conquest a vast amount of temporal and spiritual misery had been engendered in Europe, and especially in Italy. At the sight of so many and great evils a devout priest, Francis Albertini, who in 1819 died in the fame of sanctity as bishop of Terracina in Italy, felt himself strongly urged to do something towards their abatement. Besides he was solicitous for the salvation of so many immortal souls, every one of which was ransomed at the infinite price of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. Accordingly he founded at the church of St. Nicholas *in Carcere* in Rome an association whose members should aim to remember often the sacred Passion of our Lord. This was in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The members of the association should offer to the Divine Father the Most Precious Blood of Jesus for the following intentions: 1) For the remission of their own sins; 2) for the needs of the Church; 3) for the conversion of sinners; 4) for the relief of the Suffering Souls in Purgatory.

Pope Pius VII., himself a most devout adorer of the Most Precious Blood, in 1815 raised this association to the rank of an archconfraternity, to which he granted a great number of indulgences. These latter were confirmed and largely increased on the 19th of September, 1850, and the 30th of September, 1852, by Pope Pius IX. On the 4th of July, 1878, the S. Congregation of Indulgences again confirmed them, with the approval of His Holiness, Pope Leo XIII.

The Venerable Caspar del Buffalo, the founder of the Missionary Congregation of the Most Precious Blood, was a great promoter of the devotion to the Most Precious Blood of our Lord, a devotion especially suitable for priests, who daily receive it in Holy Mass, and who devote their lives to apply its merits for the salvation of souls.

2. To become a member of this Archconfraternity and to share in its indulgences and privileges, nothing more is necessary than to be inscribed by a priest properly delegated for this purpose. A special prayer is not prescribed; let the members fervently adore the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ in spirit and in truth, and offer it up for the purposes mentioned above. They are also recommended to say every day, or at least very often, the prayer of the Seven Offerings of the Precious Blood, and the ejaculation, "Eternal Father", etc. (See Appendix II.)

3. The members join the angels surrounding the altar of God to receive into golden vessels the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, to pour it out as a refreshing dew on the souls in Purgatory. Every moment souls are cleansed by its atoning application and soar up to the mansions of eternal bliss.

In order to attain its object still more effectually, this Archconfraternity united with the Archconfraternity for the Relief of the Souls in Purgatory, established in the Redemptorist church of *S. Maria in Monterone* in Rome under the title of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This Archconfraternity was established for the purpose of offering up continually good works and sacrifices for the Suffering Souls in Purgatory. It was approved by Pope Gregory XVI.,

who also endowed it with many indulgences and privileges. (January 19th and May 4th, 1841.) On the 18th of June of the same year he raised it to the rank of an archconfraternity, with the privilege of aggregating to itself other confraternities of the same name and object, and to share with them its privileges and indulgences, provided the conditions prescribed by Pope Clement VIII. be observed.

Pope Pius IX., by decree of August 23d, 1861, granted the following privileges to the Moderator General of this Archconfraternity:

a) With the approbation of the Ordinary to affiliate confraternities even in places where one is already canonically established under the same title for the relief of the Suffering Souls, without regard to the distance otherwise prescribed for confraternities of the same title.

b) To affiliate with the Archconfraternity not only every confraternity whose purpose is the relief of the Suffering Souls, and which therefore has the same or a similar name and object; but also every other canonically established confraternity of a totally different name and object, provided it adds to its title the words "for the relief of the Suffering Souls", by which affiliation it will share the indulgences and privileges of the Archconfraternity; and provided also, that the conditions prescribed by Pope Clement VIII. be observed. (Hence no confraternity is to be aggregated which is already affiliated to some other archconfraternity.)

c) To subdelegate priests everywhere in places where this Archconfraternity is not canonically established, and to grant them the personal faculty of ad-

mitting the faithful to membership, with the obligation however of sending the names of those admitted from time to time to the general register either of the Archconfraternity of *S. Maria in Monterone*, Rome, or to some aggregated confraternity of the same title.

4. Those desiring to become members of this Archconfraternity must have their baptismal and family name inscribed on the register by one of the directors, or by a priest delegated for this purpose.

The members are exhorted, without however incurring the least obligation, either to have a Mass celebrated once a year for all the souls in Purgatory, or for the souls of the deceased members of the Archconfraternity. Or if they cannot do this, they ought to assist at Mass once a year, or receive the sacraments, or say the rosary of five decades, or visit the Stations of the Cross for this intention. They are also exhorted to offer up other good works and prayers, to gain indulgences, etc., for the Suffering Souls, and to unite all these pious suffrages with the prayer, Masses, and good works of the other members, and particularly with those of religious Orders and Congregations.

5. The directors of the affiliated confraternities, and the priests subdelegated to inscribe members shall be zealously intent on propagating the Archconfraternity among the faithful; and they shall exhort the people, whenever opportunity offers, to assist the Suffering Souls.

Branch confraternities may be established (canonically by the Ordinaries) in all churches and public chapels for all the faithful, and may then be aggregated to the Archconfraternity. Bishops may also permit them to be established in the churches and oratories

of nuns, and then have them aggregated; not for the faithful in general however, but only for the nuns and inmates of the convent, pupils, servants, etc. These all remain members of the Archconfraternity, even if they leave the convent or institute.

Indulgences and Privileges of the Archconfraternity

I. Of the Most Precious Blood; *II. Of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin;*

For the Relief and Ransom of the Suffering Souls.

(*Rescripta authentica*, II. 49.)

I. PLENARY INDULGENCES:

1. On the day of admission. Condition: Confession, communion, and prayer for the intention of the Pope.

2. Once a month, on any day whatsoever. Condition: Confession, communion and prayer as above in some church or public oratory; or in case of impossibility, the performance of some other good work imposed by the confessor.

3. On every day when, after receiving the holy sacraments, a member either prays orally or meditates for one hour, or partly prays orally and partly meditates, both in honor of the Passion of our Lord and the Sorrows of Mary, His Mother. Prayer, also, for the intention of the Pope.

1. On the day of admission.

2. On Christmas.

3. On the feast of the Epiphany.

4. On the feast of Corpus Christi.

5. On the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

6. On the feast of the Nativity of the B. V. Mary.

7. On the feast of the Annunciation of the B. V. Mary.

8. On the feast of the Purification of the B. V. Mary.

9. On the feast of the Assumption of the B. V. Mary.

10. On the feast of the Apparition of St. Michael. (May 8.)

11. On the feast of St. Michael. (September 29.)

4. At the hour of death, if they devoutly invoke, after having received the sacraments, the Most Holy Name of Jesus by word of mouth, and when this is impossible, in their hearts.—The members are also entitled to receive in the hour of death, by the priest delegated, the apostolic blessing, with which a plenary indulgence is connected.

5. On the feast of the Most Precious Blood, celebrated on the first Sunday of July.

6. On Christmas.

7. On the feast of the Epiphany.

8. On Easter Sunday.

9. On the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

10. On the feast of the Purification of the B. V. Mary.

11. On the feast of the Assumption of the B. V. Mary.

12. On the feast of Mary, Help of Christians. (May 24.)

13. On the feast of the Holy Rosary. (First Sunday of October.)

14. On the feast of Ss. Peter and Paul.

15. On All Souls' Day.

12. On the feast of St. Joseph. (March 19.)

13. On the feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph. (Third Sunday after Easter.)

14. On the feast of Ss. Peter. and Paul.

15. On All Souls' Day.

16. On one day of every month according to one's own selection.

17. At the hour of death, if, after receiving if possible the sacraments, they devoutly invoke by word of mouth, and when this is impossible, in their hearts, the Most Holy Name of Jesus.

For the gaining of the above indulgences it is necessary, besides confession and communion, to visit some church or public chapel, if the confessor for sufficient reason does not commute the visit into some other

good work. These indulgences may be gained on the days mentioned, or on any day within the octave.

The following indulgences can be gained only on the days indicated:

16. On New Year's Day.
17. On all Fridays during March.
18. On the 28th of March, feast of the Miracle of the Precious Blood in the church of St. Mary in Vado, at Ferrara. (1171.)
19. On Holy Thursday.
20. On the feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross.
21. On the feast of the Ascension of Our Lord.
22. On the feast of Pentecost.
23. On the feast of Corpus Christi.
24. On the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.
25. On the feast of the Most Holy Redeemer. (Third Sunday in July, or October 23.)
26. On the feast of the Annunciation B. V. M.
27. On Friday in Passion Week, feast of the Seven Dolors B. V. M.
28. On the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. (July 16.)
29. On the feast of the Nativity B. V. M.
30. On the feast of the Seven Dolors B. V. M. (Third Sunday in September.)

31. On the feast of the Presentation B. V. M. (Nov. 21.)
32. On the feast of St. Joseph.
33. On the feast of St. John Bapt. (June 24.)
34. On the feast of All Saints.
35. On the feast of St. Francis Xavier. (December 3.)
36. On the feast of St. Nicholas. (December 6.)

II. PARTIAL INDULGENCES:

1. *An indulgence of ten years and ten quarantines* on all the other feasts of our Lord and of the Blessed Virgin Mary not mentioned above. Also: on the feasts of the Apostles and Evangelists, of the angels and archangels; on the feasts of Ss. Joachim, Ann, Lawrence, Stephan, Philip Neri, Francis of Paul, Francis of Assisi, Cecilia, Agnes, Lucia, Catherine; on the Sunday within the octave of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus. Condition: Contrite visit of a church or public chapel and prayer for the intention of the Pope.

2. *An indulgence of Seven Years and Seven Quarantines:*

As often as a member visits in a church the Blessed Sacrament, or an image of the Crucified, or an image of the Blessed Virgin; also as often as a member assists, in a church in which the Archconfraternity

1. On all the other feasts of our Lord not mentioned above and celebrated in the entire Church; also on the feasts of the Invention and Exaltation of the Holy Cross. On the feasts of the Blessed Virgin

is erected, at Holy Mass, at a procession, or at any other public service. Condition: Contrite prayer for the intention of the Pope.

3. *An indulgence of one year*, as often as one does some act, or in any way whatsoever exerts himself, for the propagation of the devotion to the Most Precious Blood.

4. *An indulgence of one hundred days*, as often as a member instructs the ignorant in the mysteries of faith, or accompanies the Blessed Sacrament in processions or when it is carried to the sick, or if prevented says at the sound of the bell an Our Father and Hail Mary; also, for promoting peace between enemies; for harboring the poor; for attending funerals; for saying five Our Fathers and Hail Marys for deceased members; for converting a sinner; for saying seven Glory be to the Father, etc. in honor of the Most Precious Blood; for every other good work performed in piety and charity.

Mary and of the Apostles; on the seven days following All Souls' day; on the Saturday before Sexagesima Sunday and on the ten following days; also, on the first Monday of every month. Condition: Visit of some church or public chapel, and prayer for the intention of the Pope.

2. *An indulgence of three hundred days* for every visit of a church or public chapel, and prayer therein for the intention of the Pope. (Members legitimately prevented from these visits can perform some other good work instead, and yet gain the plenary and partial indulgences.)

3. *One hundred days* for every work of charity or piety.

III. The members outside of Rome also gain the station indulgences, if they visit, on the days of the stations, a church or chapel and pray for the intention of the Pope. These station indulgences are: *Plenary:* 1) On Christmas; 2) on Holy Thursday; 3) on Easter; 4) on Ascension day. — To gain these four indulgences confession and communion are required.—*Partial:* 1.) Thirty years and thirty quarantines on the feasts of St. Stephan, St. John the Evangelist; Holy Innocents, Circumcision of Our Lord, Epiphany; on the Sun-

days Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima; on Good Friday and Holy Saturday; during the octave of Easter, Low Sunday included; on the feast of St. Mark, Evangelist; on the three Rogation days; on Pentecost and during the octave, Saturday included.

2. An indulgence of twenty-five years and twenty-five quarantines on Palm Sunday.

3. An indulgence of fifteen years and fifteen quarantines: On the third Sunday in Advent; on the vigil of Christmas; for the first and second Mass on Christmas; on Ash Wednesday; on the fourth Sunday in Lent.

4. An indulgence of ten years and ten quarantines: on the first, second and fourth Sunday in Advent; on all the days of Lent not already mentioned; on the eve of Pentecost; on all Ember days, except those in the octave of Pentecost.

IV. An indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines during the month of November, for assisting at the devotions for the Suffering Souls in the churches or chapels of the Archconfraternity, on condition that they pray also for the intention of the Pope. A plenary indulgence during November, if they shall have assisted at these devotions at

least twelve times, and receive the sacraments. Sick members may say, instead of these visits, the *De profundis.*

V. An indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines for visiting a cemetery and praying there for the faithful departed. A plenary indulgence, if they shall have visited a cemetery, as above, at least four times a month. Condition: confession, communion and visit of a church.

OTHER ADVANTAGES AND PRIVILEGES:

III. 1. When the Archconfraternity is established, a certain altar is to be designated, which then is privileged *ipso facto* for every day and for all times.

2. The members share in all the good works and penitential exercises of all religious Orders and Congregations. (Rescript of September 20th, 1852.)

VI. 1. The altar of the confraternities affiliated with the Archconfraternity of Monterone is privileged every day, and for all Masses celebrated there, also for non-members.

2. The members share in a special manner, in life, in death, and after death in all the good works performed by the Augustinians, Carmelites, Franciscans, Capuchins, and Trinitarians, of either sex; also of the Redemptorists.

VII. Special Privileges of Priests.

1. By Rescript of August 23d, 1861, the directors of the Archconfraternity and the priests subdelegated by them have the privilege of blessing the so-called "Angelic Crown" for the members, and of applying to them the indulgences granted for it.

2. By permission of the Holy See the Superiors General of various religious Orders have granted special faculties to the directors; for instance, the faculty of applying the so-called Dominican indulgences to a rosary of fifteen or five decades; of blessing the scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and investing the faithful with it; of imparting to them in the hour of death the Papal benediction with a plenary indulgence; also, of commuting for them into other works the obligations for gaining the Sabbatine privilege.

The directors and the priests subdelegated by the Procurator General of the Redemptorists moreover enjoy the privilege of blessing for all the faithful the so-called "Crown of Our Lord," and of applying to them the indulgences; of receiving the faithful into the Confraternity of Our Lady of Consolation; of blessing the Cord and rosary of this confraternity, and of imparting to its members the general absolution at the hour of death; also, of receiving the faithful into the confraternity of the Most Holy Trinity and blessing its scapular; finally, of blessing the scapular of Our Lord's Passion and investing the faithful with it.

But the directors and subdelegated priests cannot make use of these faculties in places where convents of the above mentioned Orders exist. They must also use the ceremonial of these Orders in blessing and investing with the scapulars, and register the names in the proper records.

The establishment of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood is performed canonically by the diocesan bishop. This being done, application is made to the Director General in Rome, church of St.

Nicholas *in Carcere*, for aggregation and the imparting of indulgences. This application may also be sent to the Superior General of the Congregation of the Most Precious Blood, who obtained the necessary faculties by Brief of July 29th, 1891.—This being more or less difficult and expensive, the author of this book declares himself willing to attend to these preliminaries, and to furnish further instructions, *gratis*. Address: The Spiritual Benevolent Fraternity, St. Joseph's College, Collegeville, Jasper County, Indiana.

In places where a confraternity is not or cannot be canonically established, the above-mentioned General grants to priests who apply for it the faculty of inscribing the faithful into the Roman archconfraternity, thus making them sharers of all its indulgences and privileges. The priests are called "Aggregators." The names of persons thus inscribed must be sent within a year, or as soon thereafter as it can conveniently be done, to a canonically established confraternity of the Most Precious Blood.—They are best sent to the above address.

In places where there is no confraternity of this kind, and no House of the Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood, the priests called Aggregators have the faculty of imparting to the members the blessing with the plenary indulgence at the hour of death (according to the usual formula); they may also impart it to each and every faithful, if the dying person has at least given his name by word of mouth, to be inscribed later on the register of the archconfraternity.—The Aggregators also enjoy once a week the privilege of the altar.

II. Remarks on Indulgences.

"To become a saint it is sufficient to gain as many indulgences as possible."—*St. Alphonsus Liguori.*

"For those who seek the love of God and heaven indulgences are a rich treasure and like so many precious stones."

"As indulgences deserve so great reverence that I cannot deservedly praise and eulogize them, I can only implore you, for the love of God and for the sake of the worship due to Him, to esteem and prize them highly and with all solicitude."

—*St. Ignatius.*

1. To gain an indulgence many things are required. *First*, it is necessary to be in the state of grace; that is, the soul must be free from mortal sin, because the soul that is loaded with the guilt of mortal sin and with the debt of eternal punishment, neither is nor can be capable of receiving the remission of temporal punishment. It is proper therefore, in order to prepare oneself, to go to confession every time one begins the good works enjoined for gaining an indulgence. But if this be not done, it is necessary that at least the last of the good works enjoined be performed in the state of grace. It should be observed here, that in granting partial indulgences sacramental confession is not usually prescribed, but the clause "with at least contrite heart" is generally employed; which means that, if any one in the state of mortal sin wishes to gain the indulgence in question, he must at least make an act of true contrition, with a firm purpose of going to confession. So the S. Congregation of Indulgences decided December 17th, 1870.

From this it will be seen that the Catholic Church rejects with abhorrence the imputation that by grant-

ing an indulgence she grants permission to commit sin, or offers pardon for future sins, or exempts from works of penance and piety. As to the latter, an indulgence is an encouragement to their performance, since they are prescribed as necessary conditions for gaining it. Surely therefore the doctrine of the Catholic Church concerning indulgences does not tend to the relaxation of Christian morality or to the encouragement of vice, nor does it facilitate the commission of evil, but rather it roots out sin and promotes the exercise of every Christian virtue.

2. To gain an indulgence it is necessary, *secondly*, to have at least a *general intention* of gaining it. Hence it is advisable to renew every morning the intention of gaining each and every one of the indulgences that can be gained during the day, and to apply them, when so applicable, for the relief of the souls in Purgatory. This application can be made in favor of one or more souls, particularly mentioned, or generally in favor of all the souls in Purgatory.

3. In opening the treasury of holy indulgences the Church has always required of the faithful the performance of some good work under specified circumstances of time, place, etc. For the gaining of an indulgence it is therefore necessary, *thirdly*, to perform personally and devoutly all the good works enjoined, observing carefully the circumstances of time, manner, end, etc., according to the terms in which the indulgence is granted. If any one of the works enjoined be omitted either wholly or in some notable portion, be it through ignorance, or negligence, or inability; or if any one of the prescribed conditions of time, place, etc., be not observed for any reason whatsoever—then

the indulgence in question is not gained. The indulgence may be gained however, if a legitimate commutation has been made with regard to the works or conditions prescribed.—To gain a plenary indulgence, the works that are ordinarily prescribed are the following: confession, communion, a visit to a church or public oratory, and pious prayers for the intention of the Holy Father.

4. Concerning the confession the S. Congregation of Indulgences decreed May 19th, 1759, that "sacramental confession, when it is required by the brief as a condition for gaining a plenary indulgence, must be made by all, even by those who are not conscious of mortal sin." But in order to make the obligation of confession and communion as easy as possible it was decreed October 6th, 1870, that "either the confession alone, or the confession and the communion, may be made by all the faithful on the day immediately preceding that for which the indulgence is granted. In this decree are included both the plenary indulgences already granted, and those which may be hereafter granted by the Sovereign Pontiffs; provided that all the other conditions for gaining the plenary indulgence be duly complied with."

5. A decree of December 9th, 1763, grants that those of "the faithful, who have the pious custom of confessing their sins at least once a week,--provided they are not legitimately hindered, and have kept themselves free from mortal sin since their last confession—can gain all the indulgences without making another confession. But to gain the indulgence of the ordinary or extraordinary Jubilee, or that granted in the form of a Jubilee, the sacramental confession must be

repeated." From an answer given by the same Congregation December 4th, 1843, it appears that this decision applies to all indulgences that can be gained in the course of the week. For some dioceses, where there is a scarcity of priests, this privilege is extended in favor of those who have the pious custom of confessing their sins every fortnight. This privilege however must be obtained by the Ordinary of the diocese.

6. Besides the regulations laid down in the decree of October 6th, 1870, about the reception of holy communion, it should be noted that one and the same communion will serve for many plenary indulgences that may be gained on the same day, even though communion be prescribed for each one of them; but it is necessary that all the other conditions assigned for each indulgence be complied with in order to gain them all, as appears from an answer given by the S. Congregation May 29th, 1841. The same S. Congregation further declared May 10th, 1844, that "by the paschal communion the condition is fulfilled for gaining a plenary indulgence occurring on the day on which the communion is received, and the precept of the Church is satisfied at the same time." In the case of a local indulgence, or of one attached to a particular church, it is not required that communion should be received in that church, unless the condition is so stated in the brief.

7. Finally, by a decree of September 18th, 1862, Pope Pius IX. granted "to all the faithful who are habitually prevented by chronic illness or permanent physical disability of any kind from leaving their dwellings the privilege of gaining each and every one

of the plenary indulgences hitherto granted, or which may be granted hereafter—provided they have confessed their sins and fulfilled the other conditions with a truly penitent spirit;" besides which they must perform faithfully, instead of the holy communion, some pious work according to the direction of their confessors. Those only, who live in religious communities, are excepted from this privilege.

8. It should be well understood that by the *visit* to be made to a church or public oratory is understood a visit made to some sacred place through motives of faith and religion, with the intention of honoring God either directly or by acts of devotion to some one of His saints. Hence it is not necessary, in order to gain a plenary indulgence, that a visit be made to a church, unless it is so stated in the indult granting the indulgence. But if the indult determines some particular church, as for example the parish church, then the visit must be made to that particular church, except in case of a legitimate commutation. Otherwise this condition may be satisfied by a visit to any church or public oratory. It must be observed however, that the S. Congregation, in an answer given August 22d, 1842, declared that "those oratories cannot be called public, which are canonically dedicated in monasteries, seminaries, and other conventual establishments, and to which the public is not habitually admitted;" or, in other words, those oratories are not considered public, which are not open to common use.

9. It is stated in a decree of May 19th, 1759, that the visit "may be made either before or after having fulfilled the other conditions," provided it be made within the time prescribed for gaining the indulgence.

It is important, therefore, to note carefully the terms in which each indulgence is granted. If the limit is placed at the hour of sunset, it is understood that the visit must be made before the evening twilight of the day for which the indulgence is granted. (*S. Congr. Rit.*, November 3, 1832.)

10. When one intends to gain several plenary indulgences on the same day by a single confession and communion, and a visit is required by the terms of the indult for each indulgence, it must be understood, that according to a decree of February 29th, 1864, "it is required that as many distinct visits be made as will equal the number of indulgences to be gained. Hence it is necessary, for every successive visit, to leave the church and enter it again."

Lastly, according to a decree of September 18th, 1862, already quoted, the prescribed visit may be changed into some other pious work in the case of those who are unable to leave their homes on account of chronic illness, or any other physical impediment; which commutation may be made by the penitent's ordinary confessor. Those living in religious communities are excepted from this privilege.

11. Some pious prayers are generally required among the conditions for gaining plenary indulgences, and sometimes even for partial indulgences. When the indult mentions prayers "for the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff," or, "for the usual intentions," it is understood that some prayers must be said for the spread of the Catholic faith, for the triumph of Holy Church, for the conversion of sinners and unbelievers, for peace and union among Christian princes and rulers, and for the extirpation of heresy. As to the

form of the prayers to be said in such cases, the S. Congregation decided May 29th, 1841, that "the prayers to be said for the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff in order to gain an indulgence are left to the discretion of individuals, unless some particular prayers are specially mentioned." But the S. Congregation goes on to state that prayers which are of obligation on other grounds, as for instance the canonical office, cannot be understood to satisfy the obligation of praying for the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff in order to gain an indulgence.

12. Concerning the time and place in which these prayers must be said, the same is to be observed as is prescribed for visits. Hence if the condition limits the visit to some particular church, besides making the visit, the prayers also must be said in that church. If any one desires to gain several plenary indulgences on the same day, and a visit is prescribed for each one of the indulgences, the prayers must be said as often as the visit is made for each of the separate indulgences.

13. Finally, any person who receives communion in the church which is to be visited, and there offers up pious prayers to God on the day appointed for the gaining of an indulgence, is to be considered as having satisfied both the obligation of visiting the church and that of praying according to the conditions prescribed.

14. But the most important condition for gaining a plenary indulgence is to have a true hatred for all sins, even venial, and to be wholly free from any attachment to them. This condition is absolutely necessary; for, as St. Alphonsus teaches, "it is certain that so long as the guilt of venial sin is not remitted,

the punishment due to it cannot be remitted." From this it is clear that the soul cannot obtain the total remission of temporal punishment as long as it bears the guilt of a single venial sin, or, in other words, it cannot gain a plenary indulgence; for a plenary indulgence is nothing more nor less than the complete remission of the temporal punishment due to sin of which the guilt has already been remitted. Hence the great importance for those who desire to gain a plenary indulgence of striving to stir up in their hearts a sincere sorrow, not only for mortal sins, whereof the guilt has already been remitted, but even for each and every venial sin.

15. If an indulgence is granted for a prayer or pious work, the atonement granted us thereby is not the result of that prayer or work, but solely of the merits of Christ applied to us through the indulgence. It is not the paper on which it is printed that gives value to a twenty dollar note, but the promise of payment made by the corporation issuing the note. The grant of an indulgence is as it were a certificate giving us a claim on the treasury of the Church, the superabundant merits of Christ and the saints, whence the Church makes payment for us. To retain our similitude, the prayer or good work is but the paper on which the certificate is written. Hence the length or brevity of the prayer has no bearing on the indulgence; it has influence only on the merit we gain. Nor does it make any difference whether the prayer be addressed to God or to a saint. A short prayer, or one addressed to a saint, may have a greater indulgence attached to it than a longer one, or one directed to God: the indulgence attached to it is always a glorification of Christ,

whose merit is applied to us, and a glorification of the Eternal Father, who from pure mercy accepts the atonement of His Divine Son made and offered for us.

16. To gain the plenary indulgence at the hour of death the following conditions are to be observed: *a*) The dying person must have the intention and will to gain the indulgence; *b*) he must confess his sins and receive holy communion; or if this be impossible, he must make an act of perfect contrition; *c*) he must devoutly invoke the Holy Name of Jesus, if possible by word of mouth, or at least in his heart; *d*) he must be resigned to the will of God, content to die, and to accept the sufferings of his agony and of death itself from the hand of God in satisfaction for his sins.—This last condition is of great importance.

17. It is a dogma of faith that indulgences are salutary for the faithful departed. They are of great benefit to the Suffering Souls for a two-fold reason: first, it is Holy Church herself who thereby makes intercession for them; secondly, the infinite merits of our Divine Savior are applied to them.—If we, who are nothing but poor sinners, are permitted to help them by our defective prayers and good works, how much the more will the indulgences granted for their benefit by the Church be to their advantage!—As to the extent of the relief received by the Suffering Souls through the application of indulgences, it depends partly on the good pleasure of God, partly on the capability of the souls. At all events we may rest assured that those of the Holy Souls, who had a high esteem for indulgences during life and were zealous in gaining them for the faithful departed, will receive greater benefit through them after death, than souls

that were neglectful in this regard during their life on earth.

18. In conclusion we advise our readers to observe great caution in regard to indulgences. First, let them not trust an indulgence except it have the proper authentication. Secondly, let them be scrupulously careful to fulfil to the very letter all the conditions specified in the grant of the indulgence, thus avoiding the omission of essentials whereby the indulgence would be rendered, if not void, at least doubtful. We advise, thirdly, great zeal and fervor in gaining indulgences, because they are a powerful means to obtain for ourselves the remission of the temporal punishment due to our sins, and speedy relief for the souls in Purgatory. "By mercy and faith sins are purged away." (Prov. xv. 27.)

III. The Spiritual Benevolent Fraternity for the Relief of the Suffering Souls.

1. In the Acts of the Apostles St. Peter tells us that Jesus "went about doing good" (Acts xi. 33.); and of the Apostles we read in the Gospel that "they went about through the towns preaching the Gospel and healing everywhere." (Luke ix. 6.) This same two-fold duty is the office of the ministers of the Church to-day. They are servants of religion, hence ministers proclaiming to the world the love of God and inculcating charity towards man. The time of performing miracles may be said to be past, the ministers of the Church may no longer be able like the Apostles to heal the illness and miseries of mankind by a word; and therefore charity must take

the place of miracles, the corporal and spiritual works of mercy must follow us through life. The salutary influence of works of mercy on the Suffering Souls can not be sufficiently described. St. Thomas Aquinas does not hesitate to declare that alms-giving, by which is meant every species of charity, has greater atoning value than prayer, prayer a greater one than fasting. Still greater praise he gives to the spiritual works of mercy; for he maintains that they surpass the corporal works in the same degree as the spirit excels the body. Hence Boudon exhorts us: "Console the distressed, counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, convert sinners, encourage the despondent. Do it all for the intention of relieving the souls in Purgatory, and God will be merciful to thee."

2. As the corporal and spiritual works of mercy are intimately connected with each other, and as the corporal works of mercy are practised almost universally in this country, the "Spiritual Benevolent Fraternity" has for its principal object the promotion of the spiritual works of mercy; it intends, as far as its influence reaches, to place them on a level with the widely diffused practice of corporal charity. As the soul exceeds the body, this Fraternity esteems the spiritual works of mercy more highly than the corporal works; it makes use of the latter in practising the former.—Oh, how many souls are sentenced to years, yea, to centuries of Purgatory for neglecting the spiritual works of mercy!—The true Christian is all charity. Remembering the faithful departed he says, "I will supply the deficiency for which these souls are suffering." And this is the object of the "Spiritual Benevolent Fraternity for the Relief of the Suffering

Souls."—Its ministrations are to embrace the seven spiritual works of mercy.

3. The greatest misfortune that can befall man is sin. Hence the greatest charity we can manifest towards a person is to cause him to avoid sin, or if he has committed it, to effect his conversion. To convert sinners by inducing them to receive the sacrament of Penance is therefore the first among the spiritual works of mercy. Parents, masters, mistresses and superiors generally are strictly bound to this work of mercy; and they practise it by exhorting their subjects, by cautioning them against spiritual dangers, by reminding them to receive the sacraments, etc. Oh, how many souls now expiate in the flames of Purgatory their neglect of this duty! They are our fellow-Christians, sanctified in the same baptism, redeemed like us by the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ.—Behold there a father suffering because he was too fond of his children, behold him atoning for his over-indulgence; behold that mother, whose natural affection was an impediment to her children's spiritual welfare; behold that wife who was too yielding and loved her husband more than God; behold that soul to whom the favor of a friend was dearer than divine grace! They are our relatives, with whom we had daily intercourse during life; and what is still more calculated to embitter our sorrow and grief, they are suffering perhaps through our fault. Must we then not feel bound to come to their assistance by fulfilling our duties of charity, and by prayer and sacrifice for the repose of their souls? — Practise therefore this spiritual work of mercy, for the neglect of which these souls are suffering in Purgatory—exhort, convert sinners!

4. A blind man is liable to fall. And so also do many persons commit sin, or they continue to live in sin, because they are blind; they are ignorant concerning matters pertaining to their salvation. They do not know the commandments; they are not aware of God's goodness, of the great evil they commit by sin. Hence it is a great work of mercy to instruct the ignorant, to make them acquainted with their duty towards God, etc., because we thereby induce them to serve God, to avoid sin, to amend their lives. This work of mercy is practised by pastors and teachers, when they instruct children in their religion; by parents, when they instruct their children themselves, or send them to be instructed by others; also by those who furnish good reading matter to others. We share in this work of mercy also by contributing to the support of Catholic schools, of missionaries in our own and in foreign countries; by aiding the distribution of devotional articles among Catholics, to assist them to a more fervent practice of their religion. The fulfilling of this duty of instructing the ignorant helps many souls to gain heaven; its neglect has brought many into Purgatory. Oh, how often do these souls, when they see the portals of their fiery prison opened, anxiously expect the angel's call to glory! But they are disappointed. Their hour, alas, has not yet come. Other souls, who had instructed the ignorant in their duties, are the happy ones to whom the summons came; their release was hastened by the prayers and sacrifices of those whom they once instructed. What a torment for these forsaken souls, especially if they suffer for their neglect of duty as priests, pastors, teachers or parents!—For them the

members of the Fraternity show special compassion. Many priests, teachers, and other zealous Christians strenuously exert themselves to appease the wrath of God and to implore His mercy for these unfortunates; for which purpose they labor instructing the ignorant, and bestowing on the Poor Souls the atoning value of their charity. They circulate good books and papers for the instruction of the faithful, of Protestants and unbelievers; they have already circulated over one hundred thousand copies of such books and papers through the agency of the Fraternity. They give alms for this purpose, and for the support of missionaries at home and abroad.

5. The members of the Fraternity are also anxious to give counsel to the doubtful. How deplorable is the state of a person who does not know what to do. Despair is often the result of doubt. Thousands and thousands have perished for want of good counsel, and they that neglected to aid them by giving it are now suffering the torments of Purgatory. The same measure is meted out to them with which they have measured to others: they are among the most forsaken souls in Purgatory. Hence the members of the Fraternity are anxious to give good counsel to the doubtful, thereby to confer a lasting benefit on those whom they thus assist. They tell them what to do; or they direct them to persons competent to give them the counsel needed, for instance to their pastor, their confessor, etc.

6. The afflicted, too, are remembered. How pitiful is the state of those who are in distress! For instance here is a person who has lost his property, his situation, and knows not what will become of himself

and his family; there is a sick person, poor and afflicted, who has not the wherewith to appease his children's hunger; here is a mother whose child died, or a child who lost its parents; there is a sinner who is terrified at the thought of God's justice and almost despairs of His mercy, etc. Whosoever during life hardens his heart against the tears and lamentations of the afflicted, will himself have to experience the harrowing desolation of Purgatory; he will have to atone "to the last farthing" for his want of charity. Even if prayers are said for him there is little hope for his speedy release, because the acceptance of the suffrages offered is left entirely to God. Now according to St. Augustine God does not always accept the prayers said for the Suffering Souls in favor of those for whom they are offered, but grants their atoning value to such souls as were distinguished for their charity during mortal life. The members of the Fraternity render satisfaction to God for this neglect of charity. They seek to comfort the afflicted by preventing if possible their misfortunes, or by remedying them to the best of their ability. They console the sorrowful by directing their attention to God's all-wise Providence, to the supreme goodness of Him who knows how to bring good out of evil. Such consolation is of great benefit to the distressed, for even the knowledge of having found sympathy is a comfort to them. Moreover, by this work of charity we prevent sins of impatience, even of despair. We help the afflicted to gain heaven by resignation to God's will. And by the good works of which this charity is so prolific we may relieve and deliver through the application of Christ's atoning merits a great number of Suffering Souls.

7. A most effectual means of aiding the Poor Souls is the imitation of our Divine Savior by bearing wrongs patiently. We practice this work of mercy when we meekly suffer the injuries that others do to us, not returning evil for evil, but quietly and submissively bearing it for God's sake. We thereby spare our offenders the confusion and punishment which by right they deserve; and what is more, we also spare them the sin to which we would have provoked them by angry recriminations. Besides we also spare ourselves the guilt of indulging in revengeful thoughts, desires, words and deeds. And oh, how many souls are suffering for these faults in Purgatory! The friends of the Poor Souls are therefore eager to bear offences patiently for the relief of the faithful departed.—A poor woman was often ill-treated by her husband. She told her grievances to a saintly abbot, who counselled her to bear her sufferings patiently and to offer them up for the souls in Purgatory; and no doubt she would soon be relieved. She did so; and soon a number of souls released from Purgatory by this woman's patience appeared to the abbot. On being informed of it she was greatly comforted; she continued in this salutary practice and thereby released many more souls.

8. With this charitable work is closely connected that other of forgiving offences. If we patiently suffer injuries, we will also forgive offences. We are willing to forget them, to overlook them, to pardon the offender ourselves, and to pray that God also may forgive him. This ready forgiveness of offences, this love of our enemies, is a most effectual means for helping the Suffering Souls. The more heroic it is, the

more it makes us like unto God; for which reason it is also so much the more effective a means to hasten the deliverance of the Poor Souls from Purgatory. Mansius relates that a nobleman forgave the murderer of his brother, when on Good Friday the culprit begged pardon for the love of Him who on that day had died on the cross for the love of us. Afterwards our Lord appeared to the nobleman and assured him that by his charity he had released from Purgatory the souls of his brother and father, and that after a week he himself should enter heaven. And the nobleman died at the time indicated! What a favor!—To love all men, even those who have offended us, is difficult to human nature. A great many persons live on harboring secret rancor against their neighbor; and yet they pray every day, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us." In such a state they depart this life. From the depth of Purgatory they implore God again and again to have mercy on them; but they are treated now, as they asked to be treated in their prayer on earth.—Must they suffer till the last farthing is paid? Yes; unless atonement is made for them on earth.—Hence the Fraternity is active in promoting forgiveness of offences, in effecting reconciliation between enemies, and in fostering charity—thereby to atone for the neglect of these duties for which the souls in Purgatory are now suffering.

9. It may happen that a person for a long time has no opportunity to perform any of these works of mercy; at least we cannot do good to all men. But there is one thing we can do for everybody without exception: we can pray for the living and the dead.

And by thus praying we often do more good than by giving temporal aid. Hence prayer enables us in truth to practice charity towards all.—Abraham prayed for Sodom and Gomorrha; Elias prayed for rain; Judas Machabeus prayed and ordered sacrifices for the dead; Jesus prayed for all men. In the lives of the saints we find innumerable examples how they warded off temporal and spiritual evils, how they obtained temporal and spiritual blessings by prayer. Prayer is one of the principal duties of religious, and God only knows how many visitations of His wrath have been stayed by the prayers ascending to heaven from convents. An instance of this is found in the life of the Venerable Catherine Emmerich. From her earliest youth she prayed and suffered for all mankind. Whenever she was informed that someone had committed a sin, she prayed and did penance for the sinner. She often implored God to impose upon her the sufferings of others, and He granted her request. She had great compassion for the Suffering Souls, and spoke touchingly of their torments and of the want of charity shown towards them by the living. Even as a child she often remained whole nights in the cemetery praying for the Suffering Souls.—It is the object of our Fraternity to move as many as possible to prayer for the living and the dead, especially for parents, relatives, benefactors, etc.; in fact, for all who have need of prayer, such as the unfortunate, the sick, the dying, unbelievers, heretics, sinners, the Suffering Souls in Purgatory. The reward for this work of mercy will be exceedingly great. "Do good to the just, and thou shalt find great recompense." (Eccli. XII. 2.) This is a consoling promise, but we

must not forget that its reverse is also true. If God threatens us with punishment for the neglect of the other works of mercy, which require more or less sacrifice on our part, what will He do to those who neglect this work, which is so easily performed?—And yet thousands live and die without caring to pray for either the living or the dead. In them shall be fulfilled the words of Christ, "With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again," unless others supply the deficiency in their stead. And this is what the members of our Fraternity aim to do. They fulfil not only their own obligation of praying for the living and the dead; but they also exhort others to do so. They are zealous promoters of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood for the Relief and Ransom of the Suffering Souls, bringing it into notice everywhere. They show the same zeal for the promotion of other pious associations and good works. The Director of the Fraternity is always glad to explain its obligations and benefits, and to receive members. Though of recent origin, the Fraternity has already succeeded in gaining several thousand members for the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood, about fifteen thousand for the Confraternity of the Rosary, five thousand for the Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, three thousand for the League of the Sacred Heart, etc. Thus does charity for our suffering brethren in Purgatory, especially for the souls most forsaken, sanctify us, while at the same time it aids the Suffering Souls.

10. The Fraternity does not postpone its work of charity until after the burial, but begins it immediately after death. It endeavors to have the burial

performed in a Christian-like manner by assisting towards a proper celebration of the funeral services; the members follow the corpse to the church and cemetery and pray for the repose of the soul. This is of greater benefit to the departed than costly mourning apparel and a grand funeral display. Such display at funerals is contrary to the spirit and practice of the Church; it often causes sinful extravagance and defrauds both the departed soul and the living poor. Moreover it is senseless to place costly caskets in the ground there to moulder into dust, and to erect grand monuments to announce to all the world the survivors' folly. "To what purpose such display for the dead?" asks St. Jerome. "Must vanity desecrate even your sorrow and tears?" True, the world does not regard this display as vanity; but if we conduct our funerals according to the full ceremonial of the Church, thereby to repair in a measure the injury done to the living and the dead by extravagant mourning pageants—oh, then it is scandalized!

To prevent sinful and scandalous extravagance at funerals, the members of the Fraternity are directed to observe if possible the following rules: 1) They shall arrange their funerals according to the directions of the Church, disregarding for the greater glory of God the vain customs of the world. 2) They shall prefer that manner of funeral service which gives greater glory to God and hastens the relief of the departed soul. 3) They shall discountenance all extravagant display at funerals.—It is well-known that the contrary practice, which of late has become so to say the rule, often involves the family of the deceased in great expense; and yet such extravagance is of no

spiritual or temporal benefit to either the living or the dead. Hence the members of the Fraternity voluntarily renounce this display.—And must we not confess that if this Fraternity were introduced everywhere, great good would result? The members renounce worldly pomp at their funerals, instead of which they aim to hasten the entrance of their deceased into eternal glory. Instead of great display and grand monuments they desire to have a solemn funeral service, thus giving glory to God and not to the corpse. They also if possible order a Mass for the third and seventh day, and observe the month's mind. For all the members a Highmass is celebrated on the first Monday of each month.

11. From all this it is obvious that the object of the Fraternity is to obtain speedy relief and deliverance for the Suffering Souls. For the attainment of its object it makes use of prayer, of works of charity and penance, and of indulgences. Its greatest good however—of this there is no doubt—it achieves by means of Holy Mass. Our Lord came into this world to make atonement for us. He sacrificed Himself on Calvary for our sins, and made satisfaction for our guilt by His Most Precious Blood. And He renews this sacrifice of atonement in an unbloody manner in Holy Mass. He takes the sinner's place, and obtains reconciliation for him from His Heavenly Father. The souls suffering in Purgatory are not excluded from this atonement; on the contrary, the better disposed they are, the greater relief they secure by it. The Most Precious Blood of the Divine Victim flows on them like a refreshing balm of consolation, easing their torments and hastening their release.—The Fra-

ternity, following the universal custom of the Church, makes it its special object to aid the most forsaken souls. For these seven Masses are celebrated every week for the intentions mentioned in the explanation of the seven spiritual works of mercy given above.

12. Priests being mankind's greatest benefactors, they are specially remembered. The more sublime the vocation, the greater the measure of grace, the stricter also will be the account to be rendered. God demands, that we should increase our talents by co-operation with His grace; and He will punish us most severely if we neglect to do so. The more a soul is favored with spiritual illumination and knowledge, the more rigorous will be its judgment. The priest may therefore expect on the one hand a greater reward and glory in heaven, while on the other he is in greater danger of being punished in Purgatory. Of this we are assured by many private revelations. For this reason priests who are members of the Fraternity possess in it a most powerful means to assist the Poor Souls in the torments of Purgatory—a means, also, whereby they themselves can escape this dreadful punishment. The conscientious fulfilment of the duties of his state, zeal for the salvation of souls and for his own sanctification, devout celebration of Holy Mass—all this and more can the priest offer to God for his departed brethren; besides which he should often and zealously invoke the charity of the faithful for the Suffering Souls. One word to influence them for this purpose will be of great assistance to the work. And as to the faithful, they also can do much to help their deceased friends and spiritual benefactors, namely the priests, by assisting at Mass and having Mass celebrated for

the repose of their souls.—The noblest and most durable monument that can be raised by a congregation to the memory of a deceased pastor is the foundation of a monthly or yearly Mass for the repose of his soul, or the institution of some other charitable work for the same purpose. Priests are so easily and so often forgotten; and therefore they stand in the greatest need of assistance. Hence the Fraternity has Masses celebrated for them on the second, third and fourth Monday of each month.

13. The stipends for the Masses are taken from the contributions and alms given by the members of the Fraternity. Priests also contribute by annually making a free offering of Masses for this purpose.—The annual contribution of a member is fixed at twenty-five cents, an alms so small that even the poorest person can afford to pay it. There are no prayers prescribed; but the members are exhorted to say often if not daily the prayers of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood. A member of the Fraternity who does not belong to the Archconfraternity should nevertheless pray frequently for the Suffering Souls; and especially should he make it his practice to help the souls in Purgatory by often repeating pious ejaculations.

14. Contributions may be made in advance for five, ten or twenty years. Perpetual membership is secured by the payment once for all of twenty-five dollars.

The Fraternity also admits:

1) Persons for whose salvation we are concerned. God often rewards our charity for the most forsaken souls in Purgatory by granting our prayers for the living on earth.

2) Deceased persons, who as members share in all the Masses celebrated for the intentions of the Fraternity.

3) Souls of unknown persons, whose selection we leave to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to St. Joseph, to St. Anthony of Padua, etc. This is done in token of our gratitude, love and devotion to God and His saints for the many blessings received.—A most tender exhibition of charity, having its source in true love of God and man!

The benefactors of this Fraternity enjoy a great personal gain by their contributions; for besides the special merit of their alms they share in all the Masses which the Fraternity orders to be said during the year, and this in consideration of their prayers and offerings as members of the Fraternity. And as the Fraternity is affiliated to the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood, the members share also in the indulgences and privileges granted to that body as also in all the good works, etc., of the religious Orders and Congregations affiliated to the Archconfraternity. (Rescript of September 20, 1852.)

IV. Rules of the Spiritual Benevolent Fraternity.

Art. I. The Spiritual Benevolent Fraternity for the Relief and Ransom of the Suffering Souls was established, with the approbation of the Superiors, in the Chapel of St. Joseph's College, Collegeville, Indiana.

Art. II. The members of this Fraternity endeavor 1) To promote the propagation of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ for

the Relief and Ransom of the Suffering Souls; 2) To practice zealously the spiritual works of mercy for the aid of the Suffering Souls; 3) To discountenance by word and example all extravagant display at funerals, such as flowers, carriages, costly monuments, etc.

Art. III. 1) Seven Masses shall be said every week for all forsaken souls in Purgatory in general, and in particular for those souls that are suffering for the neglect of the spiritual works of mercy. 2) On the second, third and fourth Monday of each month a Mass shall be celebrated for deceased priests. 3) On the first Monday of each month a Highmass shall be celebrated for those living and deceased members who have voluntarily renounced for themselves an extravagant funeral and monument, by doing which they have discountenanced this evil with regard to others.

Art. IV. The Fraternity has these Masses celebrated from the contributions received for this purpose.

Art. V. The yearly contribution for membership is twenty-five cents, which entitles to a share in all the Holy Masses of the Fraternity.

Art. VI. Every person collecting the contributions of twenty members, or giving five dollars, is entitled to a diploma, which designates him as a "Benefactor of Christian Charity," and as a special friend of the Suffering Souls.—By contributing five dollars a person becomes a member for twenty years; and by contributing twenty-five dollars he becomes a perpetual member.

Art. VII. The names of the members are inscribed in a special register.

N. B. The above rules were formulated and adopted for the Spiritual Benevolent Fraternity established in Collegeville, Ind. A branch Fraternity may be founded wherever there is a Catholic congregation, with the same or similar rules to govern it. *The Masses should be said there where the contributions are collectcd, or where the Rev. Pastor wishes to have them said.* Names for membership and contributions for Masses are received at Collegeville only from such persons as cannot join a branch Fraternity.

* * *

According to His own solemn declaration our Blessed Lord, on the Last Day, will sit in judgment on the works of mercy performed by faith; and He will pronounce His sentence according to the faithful practice or sinful neglect of these works. Since charity for the Suffering Souls includes all the works of mercy, it also includes the hope of receiving a gracious judgment.

St. Francis of Sales declares that in this single work of mercy—charity for the faithful departed—all other works of mercy are included. "When by our prayers we obtain relief for the poor Suffering Souls in Purgatory, do we not in a manner visit the sick? Do we not give drink to those who thirst after the vision of God and who are enveloped by burning flames, when we share with them the dew of our prayers? Do we not feed the hungry, when we aid in the deliverance of these souls by the means which faith suggests? Do we not truly ransom prisoners? Do we not clothe the naked, when we procure for

them a garment of light, a raiment of glory? Is it not an admirable degree of hospitality, to procure for them admission into the heavenly Jerusalem, and to make them fellow-citizens with the saints and domestics of God? Is it not a greater service to place souls in heaven than to bury bodies in the earth? As to the spiritual works of mercy, is this charitable assistance of the Poor Souls not a work whose merit may be compared with those of counseling the doubtful, correcting sinners, instructing the ignorant, forgiving offences and bearing wrongs patiently? And may the consolation given to the afflicted in this world be ever so great: what is it when compared with the solace brought by our prayers to those Poor Souls who have such bitter need of our help?" (*Spirit of St. Francis of Sales.* II. 12.)

Besides the general duty which we all have of praying for the Suffering Souls, each one of us also has personal obligations towards deceased parents, relatives, friends and benefactors.—To these in particular are applied the words of Job, quoted in the Office of the Dead: "Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends; for the hand of the Lord hath touched me."

Oh, let us not be deaf to this plaintive cry for help, ascending to us day and night from the depth of the fiery furnace of Purgatory!

APPENDIX II.

Prayers for the Suffering Souls.

I. Seven Offerings of the Most Precious Blood.

O Heavenly Father! Have mercy on all Suffering Souls in Purgatory for whom Thine only begotten Son came down from Heaven and took human nature to Himself. For the sake of this Thy Divine Son pardon their guilt and release them from punishment.

1. Eternal Father! I offer Thee the merit of the Precious Blood of Jesus, Thy well-beloved Son, my Savior and my God, for my dear Mother, the Holy Church, that she may enlarge her borders and be magnified in all the nations of the earth; for the safety and well-being of her visible head, the Sovereign Roman Pontiff; for the cardinals, bishops and pastors of souls, and for all ministers of Thy sanctuary.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

Blessing and thanksgiving be to Jesus:

Who with His Blood has saved us!

2. Eternal Father! I offer Thee the merit of the Precious Blood of Jesus, Thy well-beloved Son, my Savior and my God, for peace and union among all Catholic kings and princes, for the humiliation of the enemies of our holy faith, and for the welfare of all Christian people.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

Blessing and thanksgiving, etc.

3. Eternal Father! I offer Thee the merit of the Precious Blood of Jesus, Thy well-beloved Son, my

Savior and my God, for the repentance of unbelievers, for the up-rooting of heresy, and the conversion of sinners.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

Blessing and thanksgiving, etc.

4. Eternal Father! I offer Thee the merit of the Precious Blood of Jesus, Thy well-beloved Son, my Savior and my God, for all my kindred, friends, and enemies, for the poor, the sick and wretched, and for all those for whom Thou, my God, knowest that I ought to pray, or wouldst have me pray.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

Blessing and thanksgiving, etc.

5. Eternal Father! I offer Thee the merit of the Precious Blood of Jesus, Thy well-beloved Son, my Savior and my God, for all who, this day, are passing to the other life; that Thou wouldst save them from the pains of hell, and admit them quickly to the possession of Thy glory.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

Blessing and thanksgiving, etc.

6. Eternal Father! I offer Thee the merit of the Precious Blood of Jesus, Thy well-beloved Son, my Savior and my God, for all those who love this great treasure, for those who join with me in adoring it and honoring it, and who strive to spread devotion to it.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

Blessing and thanksgiving, etc.

7. Eternal Father! I offer Thee the merit of the Precious Blood of Jesus, Thy well-beloved Son, my Savior and my God, for all my wants, spiritual and temporal, in aid of the Holy Souls in Purgatory, and chiefly for those who most loved this Blood, the price

of our redemption, and who were most devout to the sorrows and pains of most holy Mary, our dear Mother.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

Blessing and thanksgiving, etc.

EJACULATION.

Glory be to the Blood of Jesus: now and forever, and throughout all ages. Amen.

The Sovereign Pontiff, Pius VII., by a rescript, dated September 22d, 1817, granted to all the faithful, every time they make these offerings devoutly and with contrite hearts, and say the "Glory be to the Father," etc. seven times, and the ejaculation seven times, as also the ejaculation, "Glory be to the Blood," etc. once at the end, with the intention of thereby making reparation for all the outrages which are done to the Precious Blood of Jesus:

An indulgence of three hundred days.

A plenary indulgence once a month, to all who have said them every day for a month, on any day, when after confession and communion they pray for the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff.

II. Litany of the Most Precious Blood.

Lord, have mercy on us!
Christ, have mercy on us!
Lord, have mercy on us!
Christ, hear us!
Christ, graciously hear us!
God, the Father of heaven! *Have mercy on us!*

God, the Son, Redeemer of the world, *Have mercy, etc.*
God, the Holy Ghost, *Have mercy on us!*
Holy Trinity, one God, *Have mercy on us!*
Most Precious Blood of my Redeemer,
Blood of the new, eternal Testament,
Price of our redemption,
Fountain of living waters,
Precious ransom of sinners,
Pledge of eternal salvation,
Sacrifice to eternal justice,
Key to the gates of heaven,
Purification of our poor souls,
Salvation in our misery,
Remedy for our wounds,
Forgiveness of our sins,
Payment for our debts,
Remission of our punishment,
Source of salvation,
Hope of the poor,
Nourishment of the weak,
Healing balm for the sick,
Reconciliation of sinners,
Joy of the just,
Refuge of all Christians,
Admiration of the angels,
Consolation of the patriarchs,
Expectation of the prophets,
Strength of the apostles,
Confidence of the martyrs,
Justification of confessors,
Sanctification of virgins,
Refreshment of the Suffering Souls,
Beatitude of all saints,

Cleanse them, O Most Precious Blood!

Be merciful, *Spare them, O Jesus!*
Be merciful, *Hear them, O Jesus!*
From all evil, *Deliver them, O Jesus!*
From Thy wrath,
From the rigor of Thy justice,
From remorse of conscience,
From their great sorrow,
From the torment of fire,
From utter darkness,
From their moaning and lamentation,
Through this Thy Most Precious Blood,
Through this great price of our redemption,
Through the Sacred Blood shed in Thy circumcision,
Through the Sacred Blood shed on Mount Olivet,
Through the Sacred Blood shed in maltreatment by Thy enemies,
Through the Sacred Blood shed in Thy scourging,
Through the Sacred Blood shed in Thy crowning with thorns,
Through the Sacred Blood shed in Thy carrying of the cross,
Through the Sacred Blood shed when despoiled of Thy garments,
Through the Sacred Blood shed in Thy crucifixion,
Through the Sacred Blood shed on the cross,
Through the Sacred Blood shed when the spear pierced Thy holy side,
Through the Sacred Blood daily offered in Mass,
Deliver them, O Jesus!
Poor Sinners, *We beseech Thee to hear us!*
Who didst absolve Mary and the Good Thief, *We beseech Thee to hear us!*

Who savest us through Thy grace,
Who hast power over death and Purgatory,
That Thou wouldst spare the Suffering Souls,
That Thou wouldst release from the torments of Purgatory the souls of our parents, relatives, friends and benefactors,
That Thou wouldst have mercy on the souls that are not remembered on earth,
That Thou wouldst grant eternal rest to the souls of all the faithful departed,
That Thou wouldst still their yearning,
That Thou wouldst cleanse them in Thy Sacred Blood,
That Thou wouldst release them through it from their torments,
That Thou wouldst grant them through it Thy beatific vision,
Thou King of awful majesty,
Thou Son of God,

We beseech Thee to hear us!

O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, *Eternal rest grant unto them!*
O Lamb of God, etc., *Eternal rest grant unto them!*
O Lamb of God, etc., *Eternal rest grant unto them!*
Christ, hear us! Christ, graciously hear us!
Our Father, etc. Hail Mary, etc.

℣. From the gates of hell:
℟. Deliver them, O Lord!
℣. Lord, hear my prayer:
℟. And let my cry come unto Thee!

LET US PRAY:

We beseech Thee, O Lord, let the souls of Thy servants be cleansed in the Most Precious Blood of

Thy Son and through the merits of His sacred Passion, that, being delivered from Purgatory, they may forever behold and praise Thee, their last end and object. Amen.

III. The Way of the Cross.

From the earliest ages Christians went as pilgrims to the Holy Land to venerate the places hallowed by the presence of our Lord, and especially those bedewed with His Most Precious Blood during His bitter Passion and death. In order that such of the faithful as are unable to visit the Holy Land may be led on to contemplate often and devoutly the sufferings of Jesus, it became customary in the course of time to set up fourteen stations reminding us of these sufferings, and to recite appropriate prayers at every such station. This devotion, according to the declaration of Pope Benedict XIV., is the most excellent even among those that have for their object the sufferings of Christ, because it is especially adapted to rouse sinners from the sleep of sin, to stir up the careless and the lukewarm, and to encourage the good to strive for greater perfection. The Popes have enriched it with numerous indulgences, applicable also to the souls in Purgatory; hence this devotion is most effective in obtaining their release. The devotion of the Way of the Cross was the almost continual pious exercise of St. Benedict Labre, by which he attained great sanctity; and St. Leonard of Port Maurice, a great promoter of this practice in Rome, was wont to say that this devotion alone is sufficient to sanctify a parish, and to obtain for it also extraordinary temporal favors.

By the devout visitation of the stations or the Way of the Cross we can gain all the indulgences granted for the personal visitation of the Holy Land; that is, of the stations or Way of the Cross in Jerusalem. St. Leonard of Port Maurice observes: "True, we cannot gain more than one plenary indulgence for ourselves; yet, by gaining the others granted for this devotion and offering them for the souls in Purgatory, we can every time release a great number of these souls from their torments. We must remember, however, that it is necessary to make this intention for the Suffering Souls at the beginning, or at least before the end of this pious service."

To gain these indulgences two things are necessary: 1) We must actually visit the stations of the cross canonically erected. Where the church is crowded, a simple motion of the body, such as rising and kneeling down at each station, suffices at a public devotion of the stations. 2) When visiting the stations, we must meditate on the sufferings of our Lord. Those who cannot meditate may to the best of their ability dwell with their thoughts on the sufferings of our Lord. It is recommended, but not necessary, to say an Our Father and Hail Mary at each station.

The Stations of the Cross for the Suffering Souls.

O Jesus, my Lord and my God! To honor Thy Most Precious Blood, Thy Divine Sacred Heart and Thy Most Holy and sweet Name; to honor also Thy most Sorrowful Mother and all the Saints, I will now contemplate Thy bitter Passion and death; and I have the intention of thereby gaining all the holy indulgences granted for this exercise: first, one for myself,

and the rest for the souls in Purgatory, especially for those most forsaken. Assist me with Thy grace through the intercession of Thy Blessed Mother and of the Saints.

Eternal Father, we offer up to Thee the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, the sufferings of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of St. Joseph, in satisfaction for our sins, for the wants of Holy Mother Church, and for the conversion of sinners.

Indulgence of one hundred days, once a day. (Pius IX., April 30, 1860.)

Before every station the subject is announced, viz: "First station: Jesus is condemned to death," etc.

After announcing the title of the station, say:

Eternal Father! I offer Thee the Precious Blood of Jesus, in satisfaction for my sins, and for the wants of Holy Church.

Indulgence of one hundred days to all the faithful every time they say this ejaculation devoutly and with contrite hearts. (Pius VII., September 22, 1817.)

Then say ten times:

My Jesus, mercy!

Indulgence of one hundred days, every time. (Pius IX., September 24, 1846.)

At the end of each station say:

Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

Indulgence of two hundred days, once a day. (Leo XIII., August 19, 1880.)

By this method both the indulgences granted for the above prayers, and those granted for visiting the

stations, may be gained: thus we obtain a great treasure for ourselves and for the Suffering Souls.

The visit of the stations must be made without a notable interruption.

Station Crosses.

All those who are sick, all who are in prison, or at sea, or in infidel countries, or are prevented in any other way from visiting the stations of the Way of the Cross where they are erected, may gain the indulgences by saying devoutly and with contrite hearts the *Our Father*, the *Hail Mary*, and the *Glory be to the Father*, each fourteen times according to the number of the stations, and at the end of these the *Our Father*, the *Hail Mary*, and the *Glory be to the Father*, each five times in honor of the five Wounds of our Lord, and again one *Our Father*, one *Hail Mary*, and one *Glory be to the Father*, for the Sovereign Pontiff. While saying these prayers, they must hold in their hands a crucifix of brass, or of any other solid substance, which has been blessed by the Father General of the Order of Friars Minor Observants, or by a Father Provincial, or by any Father Guardian, Praeses or Vicar, subject to the same Father General, or by any priest, Franciscan or not, to whom the faculty of imparting this blessing has been given by the General. If the twenty *Our Fathers*, *Hail Marys*, and *Glory*, etc. be said by several together, though but one hold the crucifix in his hand, and the others, not being engaged in any other work, recollect themselves for the prayers, they all gain the indulgences of the Way of the Cross. This favor was granted or rather confirmed by Pope Clement XIV. January 26, 1773, in

compliance with a petition addressed to the Holy Father by the Reformed Franciscans; by Pius IX., August 11th, 1863, and by Leo XIII., by rescripts of the S. Congregation of Indulgences, January 19th and March 15th, 1884.

It is also to be observed that these crucifixes, after being thus blessed and indulgenced, cannot be sold or given away, or lent to others for the purpose of enabling them to gain the indulgences of the Way of the Cross.

On the 19th of August, 1890, His Holiness Pope Leo XIII. moreover granted the following privilege: Those so grievously ill that they cannot without notable interruption say the twenty *Our Fathers*, etc. mentioned above, may gain the indulgences by saying devoutly and with contrite hearts: "We beseech Thee, O Lord, come to the aid of Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy Most Precious Blood;" and they must also say at least in their hearts three *Our Fathers*, *Hail Marys*, and *Glory*, etc. with some other person reciting these prayers with them.

As mentioned above, these station crosses must be *crucifixes*, duly indulgenced by a Franciscan Father having the faculty.—The Redemptorist Fathers have the faculty of blessing simple crosses without an image of our Savior, and of applying to them the indulgences of the stations. Persons having such crosses may say before them, without holding them in their hands, fourteen Our Fathers, etc.; or they may make a short meditation on the Passion of our Lord.—Station crucifixes are attached to all the rosaries distributed *gratis* by the Spiritual Benevolent Fraternity.

IV. The Holy Rosary.

1. We should make it a practice to say the Rosary every day, because this prayer is most pleasing to Mary; it is recommended urgently by the Church, and is a source of blessings for us. Moreover, it is a most efficacious means of helping the Suffering Souls in Purgatory. If we cannot say the entire Rosary every day, let us say at least a part of it. We shall thereby merit the special protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary in life and death.—For the prayer of the Rosary we ought to use beads blessed and indulgenced properly for the purpose. Then we can gain the following indulgences:

1. *For the Rosary of St. Dominic:* 1) One hundred days for each *Our Father* and for each *Hail Mary*, if we say devoutly and without notable interruption at least five decades, meanwhile meditating on the mysteries.—2) A plenary indulgence once a year for all those who have said at least five decades every day for a year. Conditions: confession, communion and a contrite prayer for the usual intentions, the latter to be said on the day chosen for gaining the indulgence. (Benedict XIII., April 13, 1726.)—3) An indulgence of ten years and ten quarantines, once a day; and a plenary indulgence on the last Sunday in every month—both these indulgences to be gained by those who say at least the third part of the Rosary, when it is recited *in common*. For the gaining of the plenary indulgence the third part of the Rosary must be said at least *three times every week*. Further conditions: confession, communion, visit of a church or public oratory, and prayer for the intentions of the

Holy Father. To gain the indulgences of the Rosary when recited in common, it is necessary for only one to hold the beads; but the others must join in the prayer after having laid aside every other accupation.

2. *For the Confraternity of the Rosary.* The spiritual favors granted to the members of this most salutary Confraternity are very numerous. They are mentioned at length in the diploma of admission; here we give only a brief summary: a) An indulgence of five years and five quarantines for the devout mention of the name of Jesus in each *Hail Mary;* b) fifty years for the recitation of the Rosary of five decades in a church or before an altar of the Confraternity; c) a plenary indulgence as often as they say the Rosary of fifteen decades without a notable interruption; d) a notable indulgence for devoutly bearing the beads about their persons.—On the feast of the Holy Rosary, first Sunday in October, not only the members, but all the faithful can gain a plenary indulgence, provided they fulfil the conditions prescribed: confession, communion, visit to the chapel of the Rosary in a church wherein the Confraternity is canonically erected, and prayer during this visit for the intentions of the Pope. This indulgence may be gained *toties quoties;* that is, as often as the visits and prayers are repeated from Saturday afternoon about two o'clock until Sunday evening. These visits must be made seperate one from the other by leaving the church every time. If a person cannot enter the chapel of the Rosary, it will be sufficient to see it from a distance. The prayers may be said kneeling, standing or sitting. Every member of the Confraternity who belongs to a religious community, to a college or association, can gain this

indulgence by visiting the chapel of the community or association. (Pius IX., February 8, 1874.)—This precious indulgence, like every other indulgence of the Rosary, is applicable to the souls in Purgatory. (S. C. Ind., July 12, 1847.)

3. *For the Rosary of the Crocier Canons:* An indulgence of five hundred days for every *Our Father* or *Hail Mary* said on such beads as are blessed by these Fathers, and as often as these prayers are said. A meditation on the mysteries is not required. (Leo X., August 20th, 1516; Leo XIII., March 15, 1884.)

4. *For the Beads of St. Bridget:* One hundred days for each *Our Father* and *Hail Mary*. This Rosary consists of six divisions, each containing one *Our Father*, ten *Hail Marys* and a *Creed*. After these six divisions another *Our Father* is added to complete the number seven, in honor of Mary's joys and sorrows. Finally three *Hail Marys* are added.—There are several more indulgences, plenary and partial; but like the one already mentioned they can only be gained by saying the prayers on beads specially blessed for the purpose.

5. *The Papal Indulgences*, among them a plenary indulgence for the hour of death, are often joined to the blessed beads.

One and the same Rosary-beads can be blessed for several kinds of indulgences; for instance, the cross on it can receive the Papal indulgences, the indulgence for the hour of death, and those of the stations of the Cross. The beads can be blessed for the Papal, the Dominican and the Crosier Canons' indulgences; but by one recitation only one kind of indulgence can be gained, namely those indulgences for the gaining of which we make the intention.

A blessed object cannot be sold after being blessed and indulgenced; and after once being used it can also not be loaned or presented to anybody; if this is done, it loses the indulgences.

The rosaries with crucifixes attached, distributed *gratis* by the Spiritual Benevolent Fraternity, are all indulgenced as above explained. All these indulgences are applicable to the Suffering Souls.

V. Ejaculatory Prayers With Indulgences for the Suffering Souls.

The friends of the Suffering Souls should accustom themselves to the frequent use of ejaculatory prayers. These aspirations, having their source in the Holy Spirit, are calculated to give us light, strength and consolation. We subjoin the following, for all of which indulgences applicable to the Holy Souls have been granted, which may be gained repeatedly during the day. The prayers are always to be said devoutly and with contrite heart.

I. Indulgence of Twenty-five Days.

1. For the invocation of the Most Holy Name of JESUS.—Also a plenary indulgence at the hour of death for its repeated invocation during life. (Clement XIII., Sept. 5, 1759.)

2. For the invocation of the Holy Name of MARY. (Clement XIII., Sept. 5, 1759.)

II. Indulgence of Fifty Days.

1. For the sign of the Cross: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. (Pius IX., July 28, 1863.)

2. Praise be to Jesus Christ: Forever, or, Amen.—The indulgence is gained by both the one saying, and the one responding to this ejaculation. (Clement XIII., Sept. 5, 1759.)

3. Praise to Jesus and Mary: To-day and evermore. (Pius IX., September 26, 1864.)

4. Jesus, my God, I love Thee above all things. (Pius IX., May 7, 1854.)

5. My sweetest Jesus, be not my Judge, but my Savior! (Pius IX., August 11, 1851.)

Plenary indulgence for the daily recital of this ejaculation, on the feast of St. Jerome Aemiliani (July 20), or on any day during the octave. The usual conditions: confession, communion, visit of a church or public oratory, and prayer for the intentions of the Pope. (Pius IX., Nov. 29, 1853.)

III. Indulgence of One Hundred Days.

1. For using Holy Water and at the same time making the sign of the Cross. (Pius IX., March 23, 1866.)

2. Eternal Father! I offer Thee the Precious Blood of Jesus, in satisfaction for my sins, and for the wants of Holy Church. (Pius VII., September 22, 1817.)

3. My Jesus, mercy! (Pius IX., September 24, 1846.)

This ejaculation was used frequently by St. Leonard of Port Maurice, especially when assisting the sick who could not join in long prayers.

4. Angel of God, my guardian dear,
To whom His love commits me here,
Ever this day be at my side,
To light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

A plenary indulgence on the feast of the Holy Guardian Angels, October 2d, and at the hour of death for those who have said it morning and evening throughout the year. A plenary indulgence once a month, if said every day. Conditions: confession, communion and prayer for the intentions of the Pope. (Pius VII., May 15, 1821.)

IV. Indulgence of Three Hundred Days.

1. O sweetest Heart of Jesus I implore
That I may love Thee ever more and more.

A plenary indulgence once a month, if said every day. Conditions as above. (Pius IX., Nov. 26, 1876.)

2. Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation!

A plenary indulgence once a month, if said every day. Conditions as above. (Pius IX., Sept. 30, 1852.)

3. Blessed be the holy and Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary! (Leo. XIII., September 10, 1878.)

4. Jesus, Mary and Joseph! I give you my heart and my soul!

Jesus, Mary and Joseph! Assist me in my last agony!

Jesus, Mary and Joseph! Grant that I may die in peace in your company!

Also, one hundred days for each of these ejaculations, separately.—(Pius VII., April 28, 1827.)

The invocations mentioned last may also be said in the form of a Rosary, thus: Instead of the *Our Father* say the acts of faith, hope and charity, for which there is granted an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines, and a plenary indulgence once a month on the usual conditions. (Benedict XIV., January 28, 1756.)—Instead of the ten *Hail Marys* say each time one of the invocations; at the end of each decade, *Glory be to the Father*, etc., or, Eternal rest, etc. Thus you may continue through five decades.

May the Souls of All the Faithful Departed Through the Mercy of God rest in Peace! Amen.

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